

population, or by technology in economic growth, and to survey the various statements which historians have made about it. The brief quotations and summaries which he gives, however, are sometimes capriciously selected and hardly do justice to what is often in the full context a complex argument; further, he is rather inclined to accept unreservedly other historians' estimates and conjectures as hard facts on which to build his own case when they happen to suit him. Having thus surveyed the inadequacies of existing interpretations made by those who spend their time "aimlessly digging in the archives with antiquarian self-indulgence", he goes on to indicate the questions which have not been answered or perhaps not even asked, ignoring too blandly the severe limitations of eighteenth-century sources. And in spite of the strictures which Dr Hartwell sees fit to hand out, his own conclusions, when they emerge, are often surprisingly dogmatic, commonplace, or merely obscure.

In his present role Dr Hartwell is not a researcher in original sources. He provides little new evidence to add to the existing stock. Essentially he writes about what other historians have written about the Industrial Revolution. Of course it is an excellent thing that someone of Dr Hartwell's calibre should exercise the function of critic, especially when he is so widely-read in the literature of economic growth. He is able, indeed, to point out serious confusions and inadequacies in existing treatments, and he does provide an agenda for further research, where this may be feasible. Furthermore, he points to some under-exploited areas of the subject, as in his two new studies of the neglected service sector, and the problematical role of education and law in the Industrial Revolution—in some ways the most interesting chapters in the book. Dr Hartwell, indeed, performs a valuable service, if he performs it somewhat eccentrically, and his papers add up to a thought-provoking volume which experts and their students should not ignore.

It is of course well recognized by now that landowners played a significant role in Britain's economic development. The economic interests of many estate owners ranged well beyond their normal functions of managing and improving farmland. The fact was that in the early days of industrial growth a substantial part of the available capital supply was in the hands of rentier landlords, and



From *Journal of Diderot and Rousseau*, Aquatint in sepia, 1776, by Paul Sandby. Both illustrations are reproduced by kind permission of the publishers from *Art and the Industrial Revolution* by Francis D. Klingender, edited by Arthur Elton (Evelyn, Adams and Mackay, 1968)

since they controlled some three-quarters of the nation's territory it necessarily followed that the large-scale exploitation of mineral resources, the making of river improvements, canals, turnpikes, harbours and railways, as well as the development of industrial towns, suburbs and seaside resorts, were very often dependent on their initiative, encouragement, or consent.

It could hardly be expected, of course, that landed proprietors would welcome unreservedly the industrial reshaping of their estates. Their attitudes were often unevenly compounded of a desire on the one hand to protect their local landscape and sporting amenities against the encroachment of smoky factories and ugly slag heaps, and on the other of a keen appreciation of the beneficial effects that mining royalties, urban ground rents, and sales of land for transport projects would have for their often strained, sometimes desperate, finances. The rise of some of the greatest families was founded on mineral, urban or industrial

wealth. Coal was the mainstay of the Lowthers and their Cumberland ports, of the Marquess of London-ry at Seaton, and of the Marquess of Bute at Cardiff; coal and iron together formed the basis of the Dudleys' powerful grip on the Black Country; the proverbial wealth of the Grosvenors was founded on an inheritance consisting of a few precious square miles that happened to lie between Oxford Street and Piccadilly; while the empire of the seventh Duke of Devonshire extended from the balmy shores of Eastbourne to the lead mines of Derbyshire and the coal mines of Lancashire and Yorkshire.

The outlines of this story have already been provided by the pioneers in modern estate studies, H. J. Habakkuk, G. E. Mingay, and F. M. L. Thompson. In *Land and Industry* some of the details are filled in and discussed by a team consisting mainly of young scholars. The new contributions are both general and local, and as is often the case

in such collections it is the more local and the more novel and interesting. These include a paper on mining and urban development in nineteenth-century Staffordshire and three essays concerned mainly with the eighteenth century—on Ulster landowners and the development of the linen industry, the purchase of landed estates by the successful tobacco and West Indian merchants of Glasgow, and the estate policies of two wealthy cloth merchants of Leeds. In addition, Professor Spring provides a more general survey of the landowners' role in nineteenth-century industrialism, and J. T. Ward furnishes a long string of examples of one aspect of this role, the landowner and mining enterprise.

In sum, the main advantage of these essays is to show the variety of the economic activities of the landowners and the wide range of influences which affected their response to industrialization. This is valuable, but the collection does not constitute a comprehensive or systematic treatment of the subject, and the essays are generally too limited in scope to be of much interest to historians interested in the questions of economic growth. It is clear that landowners played a quite possibly a key part in the developing industrial areas, but how much of this is due to their own initiative and how much to the relatively slow and uncertain pace of economic growth in the period compared with the era after 1750, is a question which the book does not answer. For while describing the important advances achieved in the two centuries before 1750 in agriculture and industrial technology, in transport, and in market organization, Dr Clarkson talks at the same time of "stagnation". Evidently there was some growth, though in his view the advances of the time were insufficient to give rise to large sustained increases in per capita incomes, especially in the period of rapid population growth before the middle of the seventeenth century, when numbers pressed heavily on available resources.

Subsequently, as the population grew and growing productivity in agriculture caused a secular fall in labour force in rural areas, the improvement in real incomes, which was a significant factor in the absence of large expansion in the size of the home market or in the size of the foreign market, was occurring in cropping and husbandry and also in heavier stocking and manuring of the land. Other factors of specialization were also at work, but in Dr Clarkson's view, "insufficient to generate a pressure of demand before 1750 strong enough to bring about a fundamental break-over half of the labour was employed in metal-working, was characterized by Defoe as 'very populous', in the streets narrow, and the houses dark and black, and the air by the continual smoke of the chimneys which are always at work". The villages between Leeds and Huddersfield were "in a hurry of work", and "Black Burnley" had long been eminent for its iron and steel.

Dr Clarkson rightly stresses the importance of the leather industry in towns like Ashby, Leicester, Northampton and Oxford, employed more hands than did any other industry. Dr Clarkson also notes the heavy demand for labour in the expansion of the textile industries in pastoral and wool areas where farming was only small-scale or supplementary occupation; but the major farming was intensively market-orientated.

Enticed particularly by the concentration of demand in London and the growing seaports and industrial areas.

In general, Dr Clarkson is concerned more with the broad characteristics of the early modern economy than with the problem of economic growth as such. Nevertheless, much of his argument is related to the relatively slow and uncertain pace of economic growth in his period compared with the era after 1750. It is a question which the book does not answer. For while describing the important advances achieved in the two centuries before 1750 in agriculture and industrial technology, in transport, and in market organization, Dr Clarkson talks at the same time of "stagnation". Evidently there was some growth, though in his view the advances of the time were insufficient to give rise to large sustained increases in per capita incomes, especially in the period of rapid population growth before the middle of the seventeenth century, when numbers pressed heavily on available resources.

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size of population. A high age of marriage together with control of births regulated fertility, while occasional harvest failures and a high incidence of disease caused fluctuations in mortality. Both birth rates and death rates were high, but changes in the one were influenced by changes in the other as fertility eventually accommodated itself to shifts in the level of mortality.

At some point in the eighteenth century in England apparently in the 1740s this equilibrium broke down and a "demographic revolution" occurred. In England this demographic revolution coincided broadly with the Industrial Revolution, and clearly there were important interrelationships between the two processes. In Professor Habakkuk's view a decline in the incidence of disease, and possibly the influence of improvements in food supplies, led to a diminished death rate; at the same time a bulge in the birth rate, following the preceding period of high mortality, produced an age composition highly favourable to earlier marriage. The agricultural and industrial expansion, various changes in the structure of land ownership and farming, and greater opportunities for migration appear to have had the effect of delaying for a long period the traditional response to reduced mortality of a decline in fertility. Fertility, indeed, remained high until eventually, in the later nineteenth century, the reduced mortality among children and the growing pressure of numbers led to a compensating fall in the birth rate and so to an average size of surviving family which was not greatly different from that of pre-industrial days.

Apart from examining the various factors influencing mortality and fertility, Professor Habakkuk considers briefly the economic consequences of an expanding population. On the whole, he takes an optimistic view, arguing that the unfavourable effects on capital formation and dependency ratios may have been more than offset by the resulting economies of scale, for example in transport, and greater division of labour in an extended market. Population growth may also have given a stimulus to the acquisition of technical knowledge, while it certainly encouraged the growth of certain sectors through the stimulus given to urbanization and the expansion of the cultivated area. Further, the cheapening of labour was a factor in raising profit levels and hence in stimulating a higher rate of capital accumulation and investment.

In so brief a compass many of these arguments are necessarily left rather vague and unsubstantiated, and of course the whole controversial subject of the demographic revolution and its role in the industrial expansion of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is undergoing constant research and modification. What the distinguished author of *Population Growth and Economic Development since 1750* provides is a thought-provoking survey, informed by his many years of consideration of the subject. And, refreshingly, the discussion is not confined to England and the peculiar characteristics of its unique economic experience, but embraces the wider problem of Western Europe, where the discontinuity of the demographic revolution was not always accompanied by rapid industrialization.

Britain's economic handicaps

A number of the contributors to *Essays on a Mature Economy* consider another problem of England's economic experience, that of the decline in the rate of growth after the decline of the classic Industrial Revolution. The essays are papers given to a conference of American and British historians on the "New Economic History of Britain 1840-1930" at Harvard in 1970. While other topics are included, most of the papers are concerned with various aspects of Britain's disappointing economic performance in the later

nineteenth century, and more specifically with the role of British entrepreneurs in the apparent failure to meet the opportunities and challenges of that period. Four other papers are concerned with interrelationships between the British and American economies and the functioning of the capital market, and some supporting papers briefly consider the difficulties of expanding the study of the new economic history in British universities.

There emerges an almost unanimous conclusion that the British entrepreneur, after all, was not so lacking in his response to technical developments and market prospects as has often been argued. The adoption of new products and processes and the rise of productivity were restricted less by the deficiencies of businessmen than by natural physical factors (as in the limitations imposed by terrain and climate on the use of the mechanical reaper in English farming, and the working out of the more easily exploited seams in coalmining). Also significant were the penalties of the "early start"—the inheritance of outdated but specific plant and equipment which inhibited investment in new processes (as in the chemical industry).

Put so baldly as this, the results do not seem very startling, and indeed most of the interest in the papers resides in their methodology rather than in their conclusions. The latter, in any case, are often doubtful because of the fallible nature of both the simplifying assumptions and the statistical material on which they are based. As one of the participants remarked, it is a delusion "that historical quantification is ever likely to lead to a definite result, a precise or conclusive answer, to any of the really interesting questions that economists are likely to ask". The main advance achieved by the new economic history is its employment of statistical techniques to examine the uncertainties in quantitative information and to make explicit the assumptions underlying traditional hypotheses, while sometimes throwing up entirely new hypotheses.

Essays on a Mature Economy is thus less valuable for its illumination of economic growth in nineteenth-century Britain than for its insights into the nature of the problems involved in understanding and measuring the growth process. The contributors suggest a variety of theoretical models and techniques of cost-benefit analysis which might be used, and here the record of the discussions that followed each paper is particularly valuable in pointing out the deficiencies in the basic statistics, the violence done to the true complexity of historical situations by the over-simplified assumptions of analysis, and the inappropriate elements in the techniques and measurements. Clearly the development for historical analysis of theoretical concepts, model-building, and statistical methods has a long way to go, and one is tempted to wonder, with Miss Deane, whether so sophisticated an array of techniques, and indeed the significance of the questions on which techniques are brought to bear, are always worth the investment of time and research involved.

The general result seems to be that even with the most advanced tools that the new economic historians can deploy in a period that is both relatively recent and relatively replete with statistical materials, the elucidation of the precise nature of the factors in economic growth remains as elusive as ever. Neither Dr Hartwell's elementary shopping lists of possible factors in the Industrial Revolution nor the refined but dubious calculations of the Harvard conference take us very much further; in one sense, the problem is clarified, but the very process of clarification reveals new complexities and new questions that have to be answered, if indeed they ever can be answered.

Perhaps, as S. B. Saul remarked, there exist constraining factors in the British economy that determine a long-term rate of growth well below that of many other European countries and the United States, and it may be that the upsurge of the classic Industrial Revolution—Dr Hartwell's "great discontinuity"—was an historically unique, unrepeatable experience.

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Between *luan* and *ho-p'ing*

RICHARD H. SOLOMON:
Mao's Revolution and the Chinese
Political Culture
604pp. University of California
Press, 18.

In the cyclical tradition of Chinese history the successful rebel has usually become the founder of a new dynasty. No such dynastic succession can be expected to follow Mao Tse-tung's rule: he is a rebel through and through, the prophet of permanent revolution, the indefatigable scanner of society lest it should be corrupted and once again need a new purgative such as the Cultural Revolution.

But Mao, the outright rebel, was brought up in and had his mind formed by a society whose traditions are preeminently political in its attitude to authority and to the organization of society: a society in which tradition has been more valued and more effectively conserved than in any other equally long-lived. Within this political culture Mao, the revolutionary, has sometimes used well-worn channels to serve his ends and at other times has found himself struggling to obliterate the ingrained habits of centuries.

Of such habits the one to which Richard H. Solomon attributes most importance is what he calls "the politics of dependency". It is this dependency, rooted within the family, and therefore operating at all levels of society, which Mao has been up against and which he has tried to demolish by his demand for a developed political consciousness and a commitment to revolution. As the Maoist era comes to its end, the question to be asked is whether this

resolute champion of continuing revolution has broken the pattern of centuries or whether the Chinese taste for harmony, for order rather than disorder, for habit rather than continuous change, will once again reassert itself after the Chairman's passing.

The matrix of Chinese dependency is the Confucian family system in which the authority of the father has been absolute. The infant's early years are not, however, years of subjugation but of the most permissive indulgence—though much more for the boy than for the girl. Those who have lived among Chinese will have remarked how rare it is to hear a Chinese baby crying. But as soon as reason enters, the duties of filial obedience are unquestioningly exacted. The social identity of the child is formed, the individuality is sternly repressed, and the uncompromising mutual relationship between parents and children is entrenched. The child sacrifices all sense of autonomy, learns to internalize his emotions, remains dependent within the family, and repays the care he gets in old age. The life-long habit of dependency is thus stamped on the personality.

Hence the Chinese starts life believing that a single individual has no autonomy and that his life can find fulfillment only within the group. From this follows the repression at an early age of any aggression, the inculcation of a highly developed sense of loyalty, together with a natural tendency to compromise. Failure to meet these social requirements means the constant fear of isolation; only by the avoidance of conflict and by a willingness to yield can the dependency relationships be sustained. If they should be cut then

the individual suffers a loss of power. That this pattern of upbringing and its accompanying outlook survive unchanged Mr Solomon is able to show by the tests he conducted on a sample of ninety-one emigrants from the Chinese People's Republic who filled in carefully prepared questionnaires, were subjected to thematic apperception tests, and were interviewed at length both in Hongkong and in Taiwan. In the psychological tests all of them reproduced the natural view, so rooted in Chinese society, that sees life as constantly veering between *luan* (disorder) and *ho-p'ing* (peace). Disorder in the family was to be avoided; so was disorder in society. In the century before the Communists came to power in 1949, China had suffered long periods of *luan*; the best reason for welcoming the new order was precisely the prospect of the order it would bring.

But order was not Chairman Mao's ambition. Nor did he respect the traditional wisdom of a cyclical view of history. His disregard of Marxism in many ways does not include a rejection of its messianic perspectives. The inevitability of history is an argument always ready to hand. But for Mao change in society is not enough: it is individuals' thinking that must be changed and with it all the habits of a politics of dependency. In place of the safely internalized aggression and repressed thoughts, there must emerge the proper emotions of hate which alone can fuel the revolutionary passion; and for Mao Tse-tung that hatred must be called on, not only against foreign enemies of the regime, but against those of its members who are found wanting and who resist the peaceful political struggle which Mao tried to make permanent as a lesson of the Cultural Revolution.

Certainly Mao was determined to uproot the political passivity of the peasant and to give him a conscious revolutionary will. This was achieved always by the periods of controlled *luan* that Mao has exploited throughout his political career. His reformation in Hunan as far back as 1927 to those who accused him of going too far was that only thus could the realities of conflict be exposed; excesses were better than no revolution at all, and if in the course of excesses the innocent suffered, such wrongs would be righted in time.

It was after the *luan* of the Great Leap Forward, the first of Mao's major attempts at exploiting *luan* since the regime had come to power, that the Communist Party reassessed itself, rescuing China from the hardships of successive bad harvests as well as from the errors of the Great Leap. But to Mao the return to order

of the mid-1960s only proved how much the Party was becoming institutionalized and consolidated and in the process reverting to the age-old failings of the bureaucracy. The Cultural Revolution was not, as Mr Solomon stresses, a manifestation of the failure of Party rule; quite the contrary, it was a result of Mao's objection to the Party's success. Hence the need for the Chairman's just and most deep-dredging burst of *luan*. "I am alone with the masses waiting", he had told André Malraux in 1965.

Mr Solomon has divided his study into four parts. The first two analyse the political attitudes of the Chinese as derived from the personal interviewing of his refugee sample and from many other documentary sources. The third part reviews events in China in the first decade of Communist rule to discover how traditional values were attacked, how habitual emotions were made use of, and how patterns of behaviour were manipulated to further Mao's social and political goals.

So much had been completed, and a first draft of the book had been written by the spring of 1966, at which time they descended upon China Mao's last great assault on its revolutionary passivity, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The importance of these events naturally absorbed Mr Solomon and the many revolutions about the past conflicts among the Chinese leadership offered more grist to his mill, and of a kind quite different in character but much more revealing to his purpose than the official documentation of the earlier period. So in the last section Mr Solomon unravels and recounts those aspects of the Cultural Revolution that bear on his theme of the politics of dependency. The result somewhat unbalances the book, penetrating as the political analysis often is.

In the first part of the book he has some interesting points to make about the Oedipal myth as exemplified in Chinese society, where in the only available parallel it is the father who kills the son, thereby destroying family integrity, contrasting with the Western myth of parents who set the son free to realize his own nature. So, too, are his observations on the early psychological data on the Freudian oral and anal characteristics of Chinese society. But when these excursions are applied to so great an upheaval as the Cultural Revolution, in a necessarily abbreviated chapter of conclusions, the angle is too narrow to be very illuminating.

Such a criticism is more a comment on the unforeseen timing of events than on the importance of Mr Solomon's themes and the analysis he has brought to bear on them. The

revelations about Mao's relationship with his colleagues that are tumbling out in the free-for-all of the Lullian sheets of the Cultural Revolution were much too late to be left out of account. Since Mr Solomon finished his study in the summer of 1970 the cracks in the leadership, and what seems to be the further isolation of Mao, only seem to confirm his scepticism of the purely political achievements of the Cultural Revolution. How far has Mao hoped to transfer to himself the Chinese attitude to authority which is fixed on the father, and what happens now there is no one on whom he has laid his hand to succeed his father? Have the political obligations of Mao's revolution been obliterated by the elections within the home?

All Mr Solomon's respondents agreed that a great leader was necessary. It was evident from their answers that about conflict and from the personal need for dependency. A strong authority was necessary. All of them. Leaving the Chairman mainland, they were all to some degree still in step with his political rhythms, yet it was observable that the strong authority they clung to would inevitably generate its own sentiments and make future conflict inevitable.

Among many pointed observations on Chinese social psychology, Mr Solomon suggests that the recent Chinese dream of the *ta-fung-ta-wei*, harmony, or the "great togetherness", as Mr Solomon prefers to render its essentially apolitical flavour—may reflect the disturbed harmony of infancy. He found the idea still very much in the minds of his respondents whatever age. Will this striving to the *ta-fung* reassert itself when the last tremors of the Chairman's *luan* fade away?

One will find the dream in Mao's own past writings, though set in Marxist historical view. During the war against Japan he foresaw Hitler war and an even greater war that would develop from it, resulting inevitably in the final collapse of capitalism. Only then would man reach an age of permanent peace in which he would never again desire war. "Throughout all eternity our sons and grandsons will never know war again."

Mr Solomon's study will have more value now the age of Chairman Mao's *luan* has come to its end and new inspiration for China will be sought in new leaders. It is a study that takes us right to the heart of Chinese political habits and should reveal many adherents of revolutionary China how much that country has in its own political gauge and may be understood only by its own social imperatives.

The *Tenants* is not the best of Malamud, for a fable-cum-metaphor is schematized as this one does not match happily to 230 pages, but it is a highly respectable attempt to define the spiritual conflict between black and white cultures without making over-specific reference to issues of social policy. Harry Lesser, a Jewish novelist, lives in an otherworldly uninhabited tenement, using his rights to resist the attempts of the landlord, Lovenspiel, to dislodge him and redevelop the site. The Jewish comedy here—Levenspiel writes pathetic letters, which mounting threats coexist with more desperate pleading and a steadily increasing cash offer to leave—establishes the book's foot-candle in a recognizable social world. Lesser acknowledges its realities by leaving them at bay. Having written two books, one good, one bad, he now must prove himself, triumphing over the mediocre implications of his name. The novel he is struggling to finish has taken almost ten years to write, the ten years that have seen the fall of the rats and roaches. All China is cleverly done: nothing too grotesque, nothing complacently

Whether or not the reader in 1972 would accept Mr Fokkema's conclusion that the Cultural Revolution was a disaster for China, the evidence he has collected is formidable, well-observed and honestly recorded. His skill in interpreting China is well above the average. Although some of the reader who has followed the Party's own line of thought will tax the reader who has lost track of the Party's own line of thought, this is nevertheless a book that can be recommended for its insight on many other aspects of Chinese behaviour.

He makes much of the impression—which must have been over-

FICTION

Stealing across the border

VLADIMIR NABOKOV:
Glory
209pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£1.75.

Glory completes the set of Nabokov's Russian novels, and in his foreword he openly savours the ironic possibilities of this re-living his early works in English translation. He offers a personal retrospect of *Glory* (Podvig, 1932), adopting that affectionate and conspiratorial air authors extend to their grandchildren rather than their children. The contrast between the present Nabokov parading his black coats (Freudians, critics, "human-interest seekers") and the past Nabokov-in-translation is an odd one: he seems to have grown younger, more restless, moodier, playful. *Glory* was obviously written by a more controlled, sensitive, shy fellow than the chap who enjoys it so much in the preface. *Glory*, after all the early disguises it, was a rather paltry and brittle affair. The easiest metaphor for the style (and for the "autobiographical" manner) is an old photograph, whose dimness and blurriness have become part, inseparably, of the scene, the ruined landscape. The dull puttin of the phrase-making ("a linden's mobile shade") seldom lets up, though minarets do remind the hero of factory chimneys.

Tenement for two

BERNARD MALAMUD:
The Tenants
230pp. Eyre Methuen. £1.95.

The merit of seriousness is not much to be written these days. At a time when sundry public figures, from politicians to television playboys and religious pundits, can achieve blotted eminence merely by showing around a few perennials and answering among their own people, there may, indeed, seem little point in maintaining intellectual rigour before the world audience. The urge to abandon pin-striped dignity and caper hilariously across the international literary arena has been particularly strong upon Jewish writers in recent times, but there is a limit to what can be done with the tongue-in-cheek-theatrical; so it is about cheering to return every so often to the work of a man so dedicated, but healthily, gloomy as Bernard Malamud.

Among the enemies of promise now confronting African literature it is possible to include the American university. Kofi Awoonor is a learned Ghanaian poet with an evident gift for narrative (when he chooses to exercise it) and he ought to be a good novelist; but he is also Chairman of the Comparative Literature Program at the State University of New York, and much of *This Earth, My Brother* seems designed not to be read in the ordinary way but to be thrashed out in seminars. The chapters are headed 1, 1a, 2, 2a, etc, those marked "a" being written in the style of a prose-poem and printed in smaller type than the unlettered narrative chapters which are generally excellent narratives, short sketches about growing up in West Africa which we would be pleased to find in a magazine. Chapter 8, for instance, a history of a spoiled priest from German Togoland, is admirably constructed in its terse simplicity.

But it is followed by 8a, which begins with a misprinted Latin exhortation (for "plebeian" read "plebeum") and drifts into wordy affectations: "time was a herma-phrodite offering the therapy of God and we must bend down, lie

so that he does share a little of that vital propensity Nabokov's best people have for making the exotic with the commonplace. Indeed if Nabokov's Europe is always less exciting at first than his America, it seems to be because he never found there the special mix of "eerie vulgarly" and enchantment he discovered so definitively in *Lolita*. It does, after that, take some coaxing to adjust to this rather prim, faded texture.

The story is generic, rather than individual: Martin's mock-mock-epic quest (the ironies turn back on themselves) for an et of invisible darning, of romantic verities, which will at a stroke enable him to generate finally that undiscovered country on the other side of ignorance, confusion and fear. The gathering ironies attendant on his Hamlet-like humours, his casual Byronic loves (the poetess in Greece, the English waitress Rose, the cultured dancer in Berlin) take on a new favour as the anxious, solid, articulate émigré world becomes aware of the inspired literalness of the hero's final flourish:

"I simply refuse to believe that a young man, pretty much removed from Russian political problems and more of a foreigner than I'd say, could prove capable of—well, of a high deed, if you like. Naturally, I shall get in touch with

ence, his friends and in particular his white Jewish girlfriend Irene. The first of Lesser's fatal errors comes when he slips away from a party where he and Irene are the only whites, and goes to bed with the sad black girl Mary. He is discovered, and in the novel's most tautly-written scene, he faces the sullen black assembly. Challenged by Willie to "Play the dozens", the insult-game for which Lesser has no taste ("What good is a contest of imprecation?" he pleads in fear), he is humiliated; but Willie later explains that only "the dozens" saved the white interloper from physical attack. Lesser hardly cares, having fallen in love with Irene, Willie's girl.

As the necessity of insisting here upon plot-lines and narrative details implies, Malamud by this time has settled down single-mindedly to the task of engineering the final clash between Lesser and Willie. From this point, in fact, the two writers

certain people, and I may have to go to Latvia, but the matter is fairly hopeless, if he has really tried to steal across the border."

Martin has successfully vanished without trace, as successfully as if he had stepped into the nursery picture ("the path that disappeared into the woods") that forms the front-piece to his adventures. For there is, of course, no Russia to return to, and dead or alive the limbo of exile remains Martin's portion.

That word "exile" had a delicious sound: Martin considered the blackness of the confining night, sensed a lyrical pallor on his cheeks, and saw himself in a cloak.

The piling-on of pastiche (Joyce the topmost layer here) acts out what exile means—the endless multiplication of dislocated, if delightful, identities. For example, Martin's early acquisition of "Englishness", which quietly disintegrates at Cambridge: he retained only such things as had been relegated by native Englishmen of his age, who had read the same books as children, into the dimness of the past, properly allotted to nursery things. In truth, all this Englishness, really of a rather haphazard nature, was filtered through his motherland's giddily and suffused with peculiar Russian tints.

As he draws closer to the end, Martin manages to counteract a dizzying series of national identities, which only serve to emphasize his true in-

are locked in an undisguisedly symbolic single combat. Willie asks Lesser's opinion of a chapter; Lesser dismantles it, and at the worst possible moment confesses, in an attempt to explain his unease, his deep involvement with Irene. Willie breaks up Lesser's flat, destroys his ten years' work; Irene leaves town, but Willie eventually moves back into Lesser's tenement. He and Lesser, armed with razor and axe, pommel the building, bound to collide in terms of Malamud's fable, it is clear that they will destroy each other.

It is interesting that Lesser chooses at one point to quote at Willie from Coleridge: "Nothing can permanently please which does not contain in itself the reason why it is so and not otherwise"—interesting because this is precisely the standard by which *The Tenants* fails. It is the unlikely uselessness of Lesser that invites catastrophe, not the hostile incompatibility of his

consciousness and Willie's. Their clash might have been inevitable for other reasons, but Malamud's novel deliberately avoids the wide-ranging view which would call for a statement of those.

But although the reader is likely to resent feeling trapped by suspiciously faulty machinery at the climax of the novel, it is written with a sharpness that continually reassures Malamud's humane intelligence. Perhaps the most vivid incidental pleasure here lies in his use of Harlem slang. Even in his first novel, *The Natural*, Malamud threatened to rival Ring Lardner in his manipulation of comical baseball jargon. He is no less precise in evoking the sounds that issue from under an Afro haircut. When ambitious Willie Spearmin declares: "They gon gimme a million bucks of cash", one feels at once Malamud's sensitivity to language. The little word "of" makes all the difference.

Quickly they grabbed their women in disbelief. Yaro stood at attention on the front step and muttered: "Good night, mass, good night."

Yaro is Amamu's steward, a Muslim who does not understand the tensions of Accra smart parties, but keeps a stiff upper lip. His mother was the fourth of seven wives. His sisters were taken away into marriage by tall suitors who came on gay horses. Yaro is a "peasant turned into a squatter on the dung-hill of modern Africa" and his face has "an agedness of hills and rivers".

Amamu's religious feelings are connected with a wooden church built by missionaries from Bremen in 1847. African children liked tracing the old German letters on their black marble tombs. One of the Gormans became a ghost, and rode on horseback into the town with a cigar as long as his nose. African spiritualists sent for a chain forged by Rosicrucians in Bavaria, to hold the ghost down. All this is fascinating, and the sketches add up to a mysterious but not wholly opaque portrait of Amamu and an account of his disintegration. There is no doubt that Kofi Awoonor could write a very good novel.

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Three turbulent years

D. W. FOKKEMA:
Report from Peking
185pp. C. Hurst. £2.75.

Political uncertainty was a cloud hanging over China's leaders after the Cultural Revolution ended and it has never left them. With Lin Biao's fall last September it grew even more ominous. Any first-hand account of that period is therefore valuable in retrospect. D. W. Fokkema has much to recommend it, not least his shrewd understanding of Chinese motives.

He was a sinologist posted to the Netherlands Embassy in Peking in the Spring of 1966, just as Chairman Mao's guerrilla-political skills were being used to corner his opponents in the upper ranks of the Party. He left in 1968 as the Cultural Revolution was being wound up and has now resigned from the diplomatic service in order to return to his academic work as a student of Chinese literature. His book was published in 1970 in Holland and this is his own excellent English translation.

Mr Fokkema has a sharp and

unbiased eye for what he sees going on around him and does not conceal his own reactions to events. He could read what there was to be read—an inestimable advantage during the Cultural Revolution, when with wall-posters and the Red Guard underground journals—and could press questions on uncomfortable cadres; his investigation into the fate of Chou Shu-li, a much-praised novelist of the Yan'an era with whose work Mr Fokkema was familiar, is an example.

A revealing account of one of the regular tours arranged for members of the diplomatic corps to Shanai province allows Mr Fokkema to comment not only on what the guests were invited to admire but on the behaviour of his fellow diplomats, few of whom had his understanding of Chinese psychology. Given Red Guard armbands to put on they readily did so; but Mr Fokkema observes that in the narrow outlook of the Chinese such a gesture would only confirm to those who saw it how all-conquering the Maoist creed was.

He makes much of the impres-

sion—which must have been over-

whelming during the Cultural Revolution—that China simply did not want to learn about the outside world; and there is much truth in his shrewd view that the Chinese people foreign policy is primarily a means to strengthen their feelings of self-esteem. They are more concerned with finding evidence of the world's conversion to Maoism than with protecting national interests in distant places.

Whether or not the reader in 1972 would accept Mr Fokkema's conclusion that the Cultural Revolution was a disaster for China, the evidence he has collected is formidable, well-observed and honestly recorded. His skill in interpreting China is well above the average. Although some of the reader who has followed the Party's own line of thought will tax the reader who has lost track of the Party's own line of thought, this is nevertheless a book that can be recommended for its insight on many other aspects of Chinese behaviour.

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Botticelli comes to Berkshire

ELIZABETH JANE HOWARD:
Odd Girl Out
268pp. Cape. £1.95.

There is a moment halfway through Elizabeth Jane Howard's new novel when Edmund Cornhill, predictable, inhibited, dependable and dull, longs to provoke a nasty scene. He is even ready to wallow in "every cliché about the *ménage à trois* that every *ménage à trois* has been through" in order to communicate. But although, on the final page, his wife Anne feels that the air has cleared, it is hard to believe that Miss Howard expects us to accept their experience as cathartic. Rather, we are left—perhaps deliberately—wryly observing how very little these characters have dared, how little they have learnt or suffered, how little difference the events she describes have made to their lives. Except to one life, a fringe casualty, abandoned in despair and unnoticed, merely another piece in Miss Howard's ironical jigsaw of relationships.

The various pieces of this jigsaw fit together only in relation to the catalyst and central figure, Arabella. Fey and beautiful—even the GP comments on her likeness to the Botticelli figure of Flora that adorns the book-jacket—Arabella is every Poor Little Rich Girl in fiction, updated. Her much-married, Ritz-and-yacht-dwelling mother Clara wants to marry her off to a grotesque eunuch;

her childhood has been peripatetic, haunted by "dirty old Humberts"; she has just ditched a dissolute failed actor and had an abortion; she is to stay with Cousin Edmund and Anne Cornhill in Thames Valley comfort.

A childless couple, totally engrossed in their ritualized and securely self-indulgent life together, the Cornhills awkwardly adjust to Arabella's forthright intrusion; for Anne, trying to forget forever a brief and brutal first marriage, this untidy, lonely, affectionately uninhibited girl means buying another Dover sole, sharing the flower arrangement, overcoming her modesty—for Arabella, promiscuously generous, loads Anne with expensive clothes but herself prefers to be topos, in tattered jeans. To Edmund, privily devoted to his wife's large breasts and domesticity, Arabella seems outrageously sensual and exotic; in no time, she has him naking clothes, lying to his wife, and tempted by total abandonment of his former self.

Not that anyone, even Arabella, is allowed to behave outside the code of formal upper-class manners: the Sancerre village, the precise differences of *haute* (Prunier's) as opposed to *roudhouse* (flashy Berkshire pub) cuisine are meticulously detailed; the purchase of Disques Bleus, orange velvet trousers and pink shirt, are the accompaniment to, and very nearly the stuff of, Edmund's wild idyllic afternoon. So off he goes, unnoticed, on business to Greece, leaving

Anne with glandular fever and Arabella as willing, incompetent nurse. And the second seduction, among the bedroom feasts of champagne, fresh raspberries, and sunny days on the river, is easily achieved. What with the drinks and the charmingly considerate behaviour of all three, there was no need to imagine any showdown on Edmund's return except that Arabella, in a predicament it isn't too hard to guess, hasn't quite understood the power of married jealousy. We are perhaps supposed to sympathize with her daydream of supplying what Edmund and Anne lack, with her inability to grasp how her desperate need to be loved has once again shown up the limited generosity of conventional lives; she is a brave survivor at other people's cost, doomed to exclusion from lives where love cannot be bought, unable to share any privacy or security.

Yet this, the central observation in *Odd Girl Out*, does not stir the reader's emotions. As if to recognize that we should not necessarily endorse approval of the almost incredibly sybaritic life-style the Cornhills represent (and Miss Howard's details of decor, cosy cats, food, flowers, and above all drink are certainly offered with tender care and devotion), the unhappy extremes of sated, petulant riches and of grinding, squalid poverty, are suggested in glimpses: Clara and her dreadful Prince; Janet, deserted mother of three sick kids, who finally takes an overdose. Not for a moment can one believe in these obviously concocted counterpoint puppets, whom nothing redeems, or, one gathers, could redeem, from

lives a good deal less bearable than the blinkered Cornhills' charade.

However ironic Miss Howard's intention — and it is clear that she assumes our appreciation of the elegantly underlying society's pursuit of pleasure and passion — it is impossible not to suspect her of some conscious siren's attributes, a few recognizably subversive outbursts, a little of the Sally Bowles charm. But "her London outfit", of yellow linen and matching accessories, carefully laid out among the statutory bedroom array, do not belong to a scandalous, recklessly animal, Flora; her ability to queen it with abortionists and gay Cheltenham decorators, knocking back the vodka, would surely not let her, within a week, risk not merely rejection but another pregnancy, by the singularly dreary Edmund. One could go on citing such inconsistencies.

In the end, alas, it is not the fascination or pathos of Arabella, the wreckage she leaves, or the heart-searching she provokes, that make a lasting impression. It is the kind, useless, maddeningly small-minded Anne, with her Elizabeth Taylor novels and her cats and her sensuality, who comes across as a real person and what a curiously anachronistic and depressing image of the "modern" wife Miss Howard has chosen to present with so much fulfilment and affectionate observation. Her reassurance it would have been to see some of the come touches, labouring, dentists, and daily helps, allowed to subvert the sentimental respect with which the Cornhill culture is offered.

SCIENCE

BARRY COMMONER has been picked out in these columns (October 29, 1971) by Lord Zuckerman, who was rather sharp about the "critical science" he had put forward in an earlier book. Scientists who read Dr Commoner's latest book will readily understand why Lord Zuckerman was so impressed, and they may well agree with his view. However, *The Closing Circle* is both valuable and interesting even if its conclusions are hardly

defensible. It is not intended for scientists, so far as one can judge, but rather for intelligent laymen, to whom its lucid, enthusiastic and lack of condescension will surely appeal. Dr Commoner starts by trying to explain why "the science of ecology" — it could be "the science of ecology" — has not been nearly so successful in a paradigmatic or even a sentence, and that its "four laws" do in fact boil down to one: "Everything is connected to everything else" — but by looking at four aspects of this and illustrating how they can be applied, Dr Commoner illuminates the difficulties of ecological thinking and research.

He then considers four environmental problems: the dangers of nuclear radiation from man-made radioisotopes, air pollution from motor vehicle exhaust, the excessive use of nitrogen fertilizers, and water pollution in Lake Erie. In so short a space he is bound to simplify, but in approaching each problem in terms of a case-study and recording how the problems and knowledge of ecology have developed he presents a convincing enough picture. The cases Dr Commoner describes are far from solution, and the holistic approach he demands is essential if they are to be resolved. But Dr Commoner is far too concerned with the problems and knowledge of ecology to be dogmatic. He seems to suggest that some of the answers already applied to these problems have come from reductionist science.

He defines reductionism as "the belief that effective understanding of a system can be achieved by investigating the properties of its isolated parts", and without attempting a formal definition, he implies that holism is an "opposite approach", presumably where everything is studied in relation to everything else. It is perhaps pushing it a bit too far, Dr Commoner does rather labour the contrast between the two approaches. "Reductionism" tends to isolate scientific disciplines from each other, and all of them from the real world, and so on.

To many other scientists this will appear to be one of the half-truths of the century. In any research project the scientist usually tries to define what it is he is trying to find out or verify. He puts up a hypothesis that this is how something works. He then sets out to prove or disprove the hypothesis, and in so doing he must try to assess the factors which may influence the hypothesis, the dependent and independent variables, and those factors that are irrelevant. He may, in devising an experiment to verify the dependence of one variable upon another, carefully and wrongly exclude the effects of a relevant variable, but that is an error of the scientist and not of science.

Dr Commoner's distinction between reductionism and holism is in some ways quite absurd. At a practical level, it is possible for him to deny that the network of relationships in some of his problems cannot be entirely understood without full understanding of individual relationships of specific chemical reactions under precisely defined conditions? And that these things can only be elucidated by carefully defined, "isolated" experimentation? It might almost be argued that in trying to contrast these two approaches he is guilty of the approach which he denigrates, of isolating them from each other.

Miss Jenkins's handling of the narrative viewpoint, which seems increasingly towards the Doctor as the situation becomes distorted by the deliberate lies of Florence and the emotive jargon of the courtroom, as effective as her treatment of the minor characters. The episode of the trial is presented almost entirely through the Doctor's response to newspaper coverage, a method that not only avoids repetition but also emphasizes the divergence between the individual, after whom the novel is named, in relation to the integrity of his own conscience, and the travesty of its representation by people previously more or less willing to connive at what they now condemn with all the denunciation of the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality.

The influence of Proust is again suggested in the use of Tennyson's poem "Come Not When I Am Dead", the last stanza of which recurs throughout the novel in much the same way as Vinteuil's "little phrase" of music, until the course of events changes the Doctor's initial attraction to the lines into a total identification with their meaning.

share his bed; and—a more constant diversion—he has begun to write: plays, of course, and an immense novel set in the world of the theatre. But these activities are shelved, though, when Buster meets a girl who, either by chance or design, misinterprets his intention when he presents her with a ring and assumes they are engaged. Without pausing for her cue, she constructs a cosy relationship, pet names and all, takes him home to meet the folks (both jolly good sorts) and finally sends him off to the country to learn the rudiments of farming while she is touring overseas.

Buster's sojourn among the dairy herds and pig-will is described in terms sufficiently idyllic to enable us to know that it is not going to last. Selfish—or at least self-defensive—as ever, he breaks the engagement and gets back to the boards, though

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Holistic than thou

BARRY COMMONER 1

The Closing Circle

Confronting the Environmental Crisis
336pp. Cape. £2.50.

PETER BOHM and ALLEN V. KNEESE (Editors):
The Economics of Environment

163pp. Macmillan. £3.95.

other, when in fact they are intricately linked. In fact he is arguing in favour of synthesis, of which a dictionary definition is "the combination of separate elements of thought into a whole".

Dr Commoner is a reasonably good synthesist, even a very good one by some people's standards, but we need better synthesists, and a lot more of them, if we are to resolve the sort of problems he discusses in *The Closing Circle*. He offers his solutions all right, as the second half of his book shows, but in doing so he strays far beyond his own field—the biology of natural systems and tries to isolate causes of environmental degradation in the widest sense. He seeks to identify these causes by examining facets of "the real world", yet by his selection and isolation of causes he is guilty of a form of reductionism as he defines it.

In a chapter called "The Technological Flaw" Dr Commoner examines changes in various measures of social and economic life in the United States, changes like increases in population, production and consumption of raw materials. He finds that neither population increase nor overall growth of production measured by the increase in GNP can explain recent rises in pollution levels, and sets out to show that the villains are the kinds of production and the technology used. Technology which replaces the biologically natural

material with the chemically unnatural and the re-usable with the non-degradable throwaway is Dr Commoner's main culprit, and he makes out quite a good case. But what about population movement and concentration in cities? He seems to ignore the rate of urbanization in his own country, which is greatly exceeded in the developing countries and is a potent factor in producing localized stresses on natural systems.

It is difficult to avoid a feeling that in his biological research Dr Commoner has seen the effects of substances provided by modern technology, formed the hypothesis that they are responsible for all our present ills, and then set out to prove his own hypothesis. In specific cases his hypothesis is doubtless correct, and had he limited himself to these, there would be little cause for disagreement.

The Economics of Environment, edited by Peter Bohm and Allen Kneese, brings together a collection of papers which originally appeared in *The Swedish Journal of Economics*. This is not a book for laymen, being studded with economists' jargon and pages of partial differential equations, but for the determined reader it does offer some insight into the economists' approach to problems of pollution.

For years economists have been trying to set up models to describe economic activity and to assess the effects of tinkering with different factors in the models. It is a fascinating and often fruitless task, the multiplicity of variables and the impossibility of representing the effects of such factors as confidence and bloody-mindedness in the participants in economic activities being severe restraints. So the economists leap at the chance of attempting to model a

"simple" system such as a watershed affected by defined pollution-producing factories. They can make quite considerable progress with models of such systems, and their work may give useful indications of the costs and benefits of different control measures and policies. There seem to be two major difficulties, however: the economically optimum solutions propounded may be totally inimical to the long-term biological health of the systems modelled; and unknown synergistic effects of combinations of pollutants may make nonsense of the models.

Dr Bohm offers a most interesting paper on the problem of estimating demand for public goods. How can one persuade a consumer to reveal his true preferences for such public goods as cleaner air or more roads, assuming that on the basis of some consumer consensus they may be provided at some cost to the consumers? As a logical exercise it is a fascinating problem, and his exposition is clear and convincing. The only trouble is that the environmental implications of providing some of these goods may be complicated, obscure or even unknown, and the wretched consumer may truly be prepared to pay for things which will do him no good, and vice versa.

Lester Lave and Eugene Seskin present a quite extraordinary paper on Health and Air Pollution, based on regression analyses of social, economic, pollution and mortality data for "117 Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas in the United States". This includes seven and a half pages of tables of figures and paragraph after paragraph of indigestible explanations of the figures, with the remarkable conclusion "that air pollution has a marked effect on the mortality rate".

While some of the book's arguments can only be described as contrived, there are nuggets to be found within it—Ralph d'Arge's arguments about economic incentives to reduce pollution, and E. J. Mishan's interview with Dr Pangloss, on which he hangs a lucid explanation of economic optimality, are well worth reading.

ALAN HOLDEN
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176pp. Bertram Rota, £1.50

John Cowper, Llewelyn and Theodore Francis Powys have lost as much in literary attention through their brotherhood as they gained in talent from their common parentage. Rooted in the same ground, they grew and flourished as plants of dissimilar species. Yet they have to share between them a single British Council booklet of forty pages, in which, to use J. B. Priestley's words, John Cowper, the "great original", receives less attention and praise than J.F., the "small original".

The reprint of Louis Marlow's *Welsh Ambassadors*, first published in 1936, explains why the brothers have, like the Brontës, been lumped together and at the same time clarifies their differences in temperament and style: "The One Powys and the Many". The sons and daughters of the Rev Charles Francis Powys and his wife (whose ancestors included John Donne and William Cowper) were, with the exception of Littleton, the schoolmaster, united in a challenge to the verities of Montagu Rectory. But the three creative writers formed a wider coterie, under the leadership of John Cowper, the eldest, as Louis Marlow explains:

He, then in 1901, was twenty-eight, and unknown, except to his University Extension lecture audiences. He had written nothing except lecture-illustrations and a little verse. But he had complete faith in his own genius, and not only in his own, but in that of each of his intimates. I remember, a few years later, his amazement when I demurred to his assertion that "our circle"—that is, he and his brothers, his friends Bernard O'Neill, . . . and myself—was, of course, the most distinguished and important of the literary circles of the time; that in a hundred years this circle of ours would take its equal place with all the famous literary circles of the past. . . . he very rarely remarked on anything as obvious as this fact of our enduring fame. He felt it in himself; and it was natural to him to transform into qualities of genius the qualities of every person he knew well.

It is rather surprising to find Louis Wilkinson, to give Louis Marlow his real name, within that Powys circle. Wilkinson, about whom Kenneth Hopkins contributes a welcome introduction, was an immensely civilized person, who organized his life and finances that he lived well and wrote only when and what he wanted. With a genius for friendship he maintained the affection of the Powys brothers, while banishing them in novels such as *The Ratcliff* and *Sum's Ark* (both ripe for an enterprising publisher's reprint). It is remarkable that he should have been able in 1936 to write such a frank study of these three so different people with their content. Thanks to its frankness, it has lost little in freshness.

From their Powys background, they severally emerge. John Cowper towers above them, not merely through seniority, but by reason of his grandiloquence. "I am first and foremost not an author at all but a platform performer, an actor," wrote to Wilkinson in 1952. He was superb on lecture platforms. Nicholas Ross, the young American,

became his disciple as the result of listening to him orate. To Ross, J.C. confessed:

The best lecture I ever gave in my life was given on Strindberg. . . . And how do I know that? I know it BECAUSE I BECAME STRINDBERG! I ceased to be myself. I was HE! How that came about and why it came about I have entirely forgotten. . . .

John Cowper had the gift of the tongue and he wrote his letters, his great autobiography and his gigantic novels as he talked, delighting to cut a short story long, following the will of the wisps of his fancy through the labyrinths of subordinate clauses.

It was J.C. who blazed the trail that Louis Wilkinson and Llewelyn Powys followed in American lecture halls.

He coached Llewelyn, and now and again, when time pressed, he dictated part of a lecture. I remember one such dictation, of a lecture on Mr. Humphry Ward. Llewelyn was unexpectedly asked to lecture on her. In consternation he turned over the pages of one of her novels, ejaculating, "But it's awful! It's terrible! What a woman!" When the typescript of the lecture came in, I thought it wasn't long enough. . . . So John took up the tale of Mrs Ward again. He was not in the mood for Mrs Ward that morning. He came to the peroration:

"But, ladies and gentlemen," he announced, "it is, after all, not so much as a social thinker! as a novelist! as a mistress of English prose! that Mrs Ward will be remembered. It is rather for qualities of a more personal, a much more personal, a much more intimate kind." He proceeded to an impassioned eulogy of those qualities, which it may be wiser to omit. "In a word," he concluded, "in a word, ladies and gentlemen, in one word, she is, she is . . . In brief, she is a . . ."

Llewelyn, a consumptive, was very different. Commuting between Davos, Shorborne, East Africa, the United States and Dorset, he was unashamedly afraid of death and in

love with women. Having unwisely invested his East African savings in Marks after the First World War on Wilkinson's advice, he wrote: "The only good thing about you is your wife and I haven't money to come up to London to see her." In a generation which was discovering sex, the Powyses were far more liberated than the hectoring D. H. Lawrence, who projected his own neuroses on to his contemporaries.

In his introduction to John Cowper Powys's *Autobiography*, Mr Priestley claimed with some justice that J.C.P. was superior to D. H. Lawrence in "his courageous and subtle appreciation of sexual relationships". But as an artist, T. F. Powys was of the three brothers the most perfect, as well as the most vegetable. Having settled at Fast Chaldon, never having ventured far, Theodore so contracted his compass that to go to Dorchester became beyond his scope.

Like his brothers, he was a slow developer. *Mr Tinker's Gods* was not published until he was fifty and his comparative bestseller, *Mr Weston's Good Wine*, came two years later. Writing to Wilkinson, who was going to lecture on his work three years later, he suggested:

Perhaps you might say that a person living very quietly in the country, where all things are so harmless, is sure to invent for himself a very terrible God with hidden idoms. But another in the midst of wars and tumult, lust and rapine, would choose a mild lamb for his deity.

John Cowper Powys, after his years of stultifying the lecture platform, also withdrew into the country. The last thirty-one years of his life he died at ninety-one he spent in Wales, for most of the time at Corwen but finally in Blaenau Ffestiniog. There he ranged the Welsh valleys and mountains with an even greater liberty than he had found in the halls of academic and the smoky burlesque joints where he had indulged his voyeurism.

Wilkinson's *Letters of John Cowper Powys, 1938-1956*, give us a rounded picture of most of this period. *Letters to Nicholas Ross* (1939-63) make two additions to our knowledge. The first is one side of a very strange love affair, between J.C.P. (aged seventy-two at the outset) and the handsome James Richard Nicholas Ross (aged thirty-three), painter, writer and bibliophile, who became in J.C.P.'s love-word-play "Rhisiart of my Heart", "my noble and well beloved bastard".

These letters show J.C.P. as a myth-maker, the word-smith, a magician on the mountain, a wower, the wonder man. What is playing is partly a game, partly role and partly a ritual. But Nicholas Ross was playing (as a photograph in profile with a dog, reproduced in *Welsh Ambassadors*) is less easy to understand. There is, for example, a letter written by J.C.P. when he was seventy-four:

Yes, I have struck the rock like Moses and cried aloud upon the stream: "Nant Arglwyddes Llani Caglyw eiddo dyffordd." (He has collected to this Mr Ross appended to note:

During all of my friendship with the Powys I have regarded him as being angelic. He was as dear and cherishing to me as any of my younger friends and as physically thrilling. Therefore, when one fine afternoon in Llangyrdhar he confessed to being not so well, I objected because I refused to have his regard of me purely spiritual.

Though this appears rather demurring in a follower, the relationship continues in high mytho-bureaucratic terms until Ross in 1951 married Adelaide, the daughter of Eden Phillpotts, whereupon J.C.P. (with a hint of relief) transfers his love to them both, with more emphasis at least at first—on Adelaide Phillpotts than on Nicholas Ross.

The most valuable, and poignant, letters of this collection relate to his last seven years, when J.C.P. was conscious of slipping into his second childhood. Unlike Louis Wilkinson, he had, poor chap, to go on writing or trying to write, until the very end. *Home and the Aether* was published when he was eighty-seven, and before he had finished it he was planning "a book called Childhood and Second Childhood". He wrote to the Rosses:

You, my living rivals are little older from one to three. These when they see my head at the window instinctively wave at me and I wave back to them. . . . Even children of four begin to expect me to behave like grown-up persons, like a properly behaving friend.

Like properly behaving philistines, the authorities allowed John Cowper Powys to expire on June 17, 1963, aged ninety-one, unburied by any recognition, financial or honoric. Of his contributions to English literature.

Why should they? His life, like his books, was too long.

JOHN COWPER POWYS

Autobiography £2.25. Novels: Maiden Castle £2.00

A Glastonbury Romance £2.00 Wolf Solent £2.00

Home and Aether £1.50

Macdonald



The time of the great price-rise

HENRY KAMEN:

The Iron Century

Social Change in Europe 1550-1660

404pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, £5.50

Changing fashions in history have complicated life almost unbearably for the writers of textbooks and general surveys. Narrative is scorned in favour of analysis, and royal revels go way to the miseries of the poor as the focus of attention. The result is to make the subject so complex that general books must either become highly schematized, or limit their range severely, if they are not to be unmanageably long.

Henry Kamen's new volume in the Weidenfeld and Nicolson "History of Civilisation" series follows the latter course to some extent, by omitting much of the history of religion, culture and science during his period, but the subjects he considers still represent a formidable challenge.

The author's main themes are social change and the fate of the lower classes, which inevitably lead him to discussing the economic development of Europe in the time of the great price-rise.

The price-rise is the only reasonably justified claim that could be advanced for the book's chronological limits, for the century from 1550 to 1660 is in most respects a very odd period to have chosen. It seems doubtful whether the kind of book that Dr Kamen set out to write can possibly be fitted into this rather odd mould. The long evolutionary changes in men's relationships with one another, and with the forces of production, which must be in main subject, are rarely easy to identify within such a relatively short period. In a book clearly intended for the general reader, the result is inevitably a confusing picture, and the author often has to resort to oversimplifications to provide any conclusions at all.

With the unexplained omission of the Ottoman territories in the Balkans, Dr Kamen has gallantly

attempted to cover the whole of Europe, including Russia; his bibliography demonstrates an impressive range of linguistic abilities, and a formidable amount of reading in secondary authorities. When one notices that he has published three other scholarly works since 1965, it ceases to be surprising that much of his suffering from a bad attack of historical indigestion. In a monograph this would merely be irritating, but in a general work it is disastrous. Not only is the book full of factual errors of an elementary nature; it is also very badly written and planned. Given the inherent difficulties of the undertaking, it was essential that it should be extremely carefully structured if any kind of synthesis were to result. It must regrettably be said that what Dr Kamen has produced looks painfully like a first draft, which should have been mercilessly revised and rewritten for publication.

In part these failings are stylistic; the text reads clumsily, as if it had been written in a great hurry. This is not merely an aesthetic objection, for the result is often a fatal imprecision and insensitivity in the use of language, which robs the author's thought of any subtlety it may originally have possessed. In the section on literacy, for example, we are told (with reference to preferment in the Church) "This technical importance of literacy would always be important"; a few pages later an obvious exaggeration by one of the printers of the *Mazarinades* is turned into the fatuous generalization: "In short, there was total participation by the population."

Similar looseness of thought is found elsewhere in the book: the author informs us that the whole of noble Europe practised the Tour, that the New Model Army was "a thoroughly democratic national force", and that the English engaged in "deliberate genocide" in Ireland.

It would be tedious to catalogue the numerous examples of this kind of triteness, as it would the factual errors. Some of these, however, are

glaring, as when Dr Kamen suggests that there may have been 30,000 *compagnons* in Rouen in the early seventeenth century, a figure which would comfortably double the adult male population of the town at that date. In similar fashion, Charles I is made responsible for ten draughts, and the "Montmorency faction" is said to rebel in 1632, although the correct date of 1632 is given thirty pages later. In an amazing sentence the reader is told: "Neither Copernicus nor Brahe, neither Kepler nor Peiresc was a university man." As Copernicus spent fourteen years at the universities of Cracow, Padua and Bologna, Brahe thirteen years at no less than six northern universities, and Kepler seven years at Tübingen, the examples are hardly well chosen. It may be that Dr Kamen meant to indicate that these scientific thinkers were not university teachers, but even if his meaning is intended in this way, any general conclusions are easily demolished by the counter-examples of Galileo and Newton, who were both university professors. On the same page the author writes of the Royal Society: "Nearly all the first members of the society had been professors of Gresham College"—which had precisely three scientific chairs out of a total of seven, compared with fifty-two founder-members of the Society.

Dr Kamen is also very careless in his handling of his source material. He cites figures from Le Roy Ladurie to show that 83 per cent of those passing through the Montpellier hospital in 1696-99 were rural workers from the north of France; this demonstrates "a remarkable degree of mobility in Western Europe among workers on the land". Reference to *Les paysans de Languedoc* shows that these figures were given for the small minority of migrants who did not come from the neighbouring southern provinces, and would therefore represent a very small percentage of the total number of vagrants sheltered by the hospital. Towards the end of *The Iron Century* there is a very odd passage in

which Dr Kamen appears to accept at face value all the sixteenth and seventeenth-century fantasies about the "Beggars' Brotherhood", and writes about "millionaire beggars, with their own kings and under-world courts". In the same section a graph uses W. K. Jordan's figures without any attempt to explain that they should be counterweighted to allow for the inflation which is a major theme of this book.

Serious as all these errors are—and it is far from being an exhaustive list—it would be much easier to make allowances if Dr Kamen had succeeded in his main aims, and revealed the underlying patterns which would help to clarify the history of his period. Within the modish chapter headings, however, the book remains very traditional in form: we are given a paragraph on what happened in France, another on Russia, and so on. The best sections, such as those on refugees, the effects of the Thirty Years War, and toleration, are unfortunately just those which are peripheral to the main argument. Most of what the author describes as his key chapter, that on popular rebellions, is simply a list of risings during the period; and although the analysis makes some interesting points, it does not say anything basically new. The decline in revolts after 1660 is explained by the rise of "landlordism and absolutism" in the West, and of serfdom in the East; but the precise connexion between these ill-defined processes and the lack of revolts is never explained.

Dealing with another major phenomenon of the century, witchcraft, Dr Kamen fails to grasp two essential points in Alan Macfarlane's study of Essex; the way trivial accusations would normally accu-

mulate against a witch long before she was taken to court, and the significance of guilt feelings on the part of the accuser who had failed in his neighbourly duty. Nor does he make any use of Robert Mandrou's findings about the changes of attitude among the French legal authorities although he cites *Magistrats et sorciers en France* in his bibliography.

Ultimately it is in dealing with questions of historical change and causation that the book is least satisfactory. The greatest danger of an arrangement by topics is that there will be a severe loss of chronological precision, and in consequence no sense of any differentiation within the period concerned. Dr Kamen's "Iron Century" too often becomes a false unity in his treatment, although it was a very long period: as the expectation of life was much shorter than it is today, the generations succeeded one another more rapidly. Reduced to the barest essentials, his picture is one of a long social and economic crisis, succeeded for no very clear reason by an era in which had become the mainstay of aristocratic regimes. The idea that there was a "flight to land" after 1650 seems difficult to justify on any basis, and no evidence is advanced to support it. Whatever the situation was east of the Elbe, neither a Tory square nor a French *habeau* of 1700 would have thought much of this notion. That the 1650s and 1660s do mark some kind of watershed in European history few historians are likely to deny, but they are not likely to derive any fresh insights on its nature from this sadly confused book.

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Fetishist accompli

LOUISE COLLIS:

A Private View of Stanley Spencer 160pp plus 16 plates. Heinemann, £2.75.

Some of this particular wardrobe of dirty linen has already been washed in public. Stanley Spencer talked to everyone and anyone about his second marriage, to Patricia Preece, and about how she treated him. As he described it, her cruelty was almost, but apparently not quite, unbelievable since many of his neighbours at Cookham concluded that he was a saint and his wife a temptress. He was a compulsive, often incoherent, talker, but he had the gift of persuasiveness often found in persons of a schizophrenic tendency.

He was also a compulsive writer, and after his death a vast quantity of material, written on old Woolworth's pads or on hivatry paper, was handed over to Maurice Collis, who had agreed to write his biography. According to his daughter, Louise Collis, "the tedious and repetitiousness of his outpourings on sex and God . . . can hardly be imagined". But the Collises persevered and began to discern "an extraordinary personal history . . . buried in this mass of verbiage". Among these writings were business letters and other records, making it possible to check details in Spencer's stories of his persecution. The Collises concluded that "there was not one word of truth in the whole tremendous saga".

After Spencer's death Miss Collis and her father went, with some trepidation, to see Patricia Preece, then Lady Spencer, in the cottage in Cookham where she had been living for many years with a woman friend. They were well received; they showed her what was left of a book by Mr Collis about Spencer

(howlerized by Spencer's executor), and listened to what she had to tell about him. Lady Spencer had the idea that she might herself write a book about her life and her marriage to Spencer, but the task proved too formidable and she asked Miss Collis to help her. After a series of interviews, Miss Collis wrote the present book, in which Lady Spencer tells her story in the first person. Anticipating the inevitable controversy, Lady Spencer withheld its publication until after her death.

Since Spencer's own papers confirm much of Lady Spencer's story, there can be no doubt that Spencer had told a long succession of monstrous lies, and, presumably, it is right that this should be established. But Spencer's fantasies, some of which were very unpleasant and which he was careful not to disclose to his neighbours, provide the main interest of the book. They are essential to any understanding of his pictures. He was, for example, a woman's clothes fetishist. Before their marriage, he used to take Patricia Preece to dress shops and make her try on quantities of clothes which he would then buy without considering whether he could afford them. (His painting, "Love on the Moor", which is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, shows a large crowd of women in a meadow with numerous little men—all recognizably Spencer himself—opening boxes of clothes and displaying them to the women.) It seems to have been a *sine qua non* of his fantasies that all the women should be hideous and misshapen, though whether this was equally true of the clothes he bought, or whether, as Lady Spencer thought, he merely had very bad taste, is open to speculation.

Fantasy was the most important element of his art, and perhaps this explains why he regarded his (lucrative) landscape-painting merely as a matter of tedious routine.

The pleasures of logolysis

ROLAND BARTHES:

Sade-Fourier-Loyola

191pp. Paris: Seuil, 1971.

Mythologies

Edited and translated by Annette Lavers

158pp. Cape, £2.50.

Tel Quel

No 47: Roland Barthes

144pp. Paris: Seuil, 1971.

The approximation of saints to sinners is an age-old routine in homiletics, but it is not so sudden collapse into piety which leads Roland Barthes to class Ignatius Loyola with Sade and both with the extravagant Fourier. The three of them are here because they are "logothetes", or founders of languages, and where there has been a logothete, there can now hope to equal Barthes's aptitude for logolysis. The four sections (Sade is in two parts of *Sade-Fourier-Loyola*) and it would be truer to the book's cover as well as to its method to list these names vertically. In a paradigm, instead of horizontally, is a syntagma are a very superior exercise in comparative anatomy: Barthes takes three supposedly ill-assorted oeuvres and shows them to be isomorphic. The demonstration is both ornate and conclusive and anyone who follows it and still denies Barthes's transcendent gifts is beyond rational persuasion.

Teologically, the three "languages" which he takes to pieces are some way apart; they are, in his own classification, the "langue du plaisir erotique, langue du bonheur social, langue de l'interpellation divine". The three founders, on the other hand, run on a common fuel: "chaque un mis dans la construction de cette langue seconde toute l'énergie d'une passion". *Bonheur, plaisir, passion*: Barthes's idiom is not always so voluptuous, and these terms do add up to a new emphasis. The pleasure-principle now sustains both parties in his critical system: the writer as he naively away at his text and the reader as he works to understand its composition. The highest delight for the dedicated textualist is what Barthes calls here "co-existence" between work and critic, whereby "une autre écriture (l'écriture de l'autre) parvient à décrire des fragments de notre quotidienneté". For him perhaps, as for

Georges Bataille, these idyllic moments of self-effacement should be seen as erotic experiences, and sympathetic reading as an extension of the sex life.

On the face of it, Barthes's move to reincarnate literary creation risks localizing it once again in the person of an Author, that obsolete essence who once stood (and in less progressive quarters still does stand) behind and apart from his writings, which could be treated as the effluent from his biography. But *Sade-Fourier-Loyola* has its own scheme for extinguishing all such nostalgia. Surdonically, Barthes welcomes the absence (for any of his subjects of an articulated life-story and their survival instead as a scatter of impressions or legends. He relates these "biographies" to us as they stand, with the advice that he, too—as a loyal Epicurean?—fancies post-humous dispersal as memorabilia rather than counterfeit integration in a biography: "toute biographie est un roman qui n'ose pas dire son nom", he warns at the outset of a very enlightening interview with Jean Thibaudau in the special number of *Tel Quel*.

With the Author reduced to dust, there can, and we should be glad of it, be no question of a "psychological" reading of his texts, and Barthes has done far more than one man's share in liberating literary studies from unthinking psychologism. What has always had his attention is the production of the text, a process which is largely obscured by the traditional concern for the finished product. To ignore this process is, for Barthes, a dishonest way of setting about literary works and, very likely, an ideological option. It is the same option as that which he locates at the heart of the myth industry in *Mythologies*, where there is the will to present as natural what is both artificial and historical.

Barthes analyses composition as a "second" language: second because the logothete has to work with a first, antecedent language. His three studies of this work in *Sade-Fourier-Loyola* are extraordinarily subtle and illuminating. He starts from the *chambre* which the logothete needs to impose, which is the frontier of his own linguistic authority and a forti-

fication against other, intrusive languages. Isolation, in a château (Sade), a phalanstery (Fourier) or a retreat (Loyola) is thus an especially significant episode for Barthes and one which richly justifies his own approach.

After isolation comes the essential *jeu combinatoire*. The need here is to determine what the units are which the logothete combines. With Sade it is the human body; Barthes establishes a gradation from a single posture in an individual up to more and more intricate knots of flesh, as the search worms up for the ideal of "une figure totale". In Fourier, the unit is a "passion" and the language-work the multiple articulation of passions that leads to an ultimate reordering of the entire universe, with the procurement of pleasure for all as its goal. In Loyola, the units are images, or "imaginary views", which are combined until the mental life of the suppliant is wholly formalized and he is fit to receive God's answer to his supplication.

To combine units is also, of course, to manufacture meanings and Barthes is able consistently to make sense out of what, at least in the cases of Sade and Fourier, might look to less systematic minds as complete derangement. He is quite obviously keener on Sade and Fourier than he is on Loyola, but equally helpful on all three. The flagrant non-viability of the systems of Sade and Fourier makes them more exemplary as logothetes than the pragmatic Loyola; the impossible can hardly be confused with the referential.

Because he studies the signifiers and lets the signifieds take care of themselves, Barthes is also able to parry with ease the stock and understandable complaint against Sade that he is a bore: read as some sort of realist, Barthes allows, Sade is monotonous; read as a logothete he is a mightily resourceful syntactician, censurable only because he challenges the realist assumptions of bourgeois criticism. (It is a moot point, on which Barthes does not touch, whether his own delight in Sade's virtuosity as a logothete could ever be as intense as the sexual stimulation the poor bourgeois might hope to derive from his reading.) There is a small error in *Sade*

Fourier Loyola which Barthes himself might care to analyse as a "myth". He refers to Robert Owen's utopian community as "New Larnark" instead of New Lanark, as if it were a precocious attempt to mitigate Darwin how else but through the inheritance of an acquired benevolence could any utopia expect to survive into a second generation?

Annette Lavers has, in fact, selected and translated twenty-eight of the fifty-three *Mythologies* which Barthes originally published in book-form in 1957. Her choice is sensible, even if it would have been good to have had "Le Tour de France comme épopée", Billy Graham in Paris and the brief squib about Martians, which contained the astute and still relevant thought: "L'URSS est un monde intermédiaire entre la Terre et Mars". As well as the mythologies themselves, Dr Lavers has also translated the substantial theoretical essay "Myth today", which is a useful presentation of Barthes's method as a whole.

The *Mythologies* are short pieces of sharply committed journalism. Barthes selects assorted manifestations of what we now think of as mass-culture all-in wrestling, detergent ads, election handouts and analyses them not as facts of life but as facts of history. The nub of his quarrel with myths is that they publicize as natural and universal what is truly local and historical. The mythologist is the man who shows up this deception, by revealing precisely what social or ideological choices have been smuggled into images and spectacles purveyed as acts of God. Barthes's idea, brilliantly worked out, is to repoliticize the urban scene and, in Marxist terms, to show us just how alienation works.

His exercises in demystification are often amusing and invariably clever, and the theoretical essay at the end is essential reading. One would have to be most obtuse not to derive from *Mythologies* sufficient technique to be able to "read" one's own environment in the same terms; and the capacity to do so is a source of pleasure, if not of power. This being the case, it may seem rather spoil-sport to question Barthes's mythical weaponry. In France, the linguist Georges Moulin has been very sharp with him for mistaking linguistic

terms, and these do create no fewer difficulties.

Myth, declares Barthes, is a kind of speech and goes on to give that kind of speech it is. The particular language is all one of "ad-hominem", of placing its auditors individually, but the force cannot answer back. Indeed, it is not clear that this form of speech has any identifiable speakers, the culprits who promulgate myths are a class, the bourgeoisie (now seen by Barthes as the reservoir of all languages), and the myth, consequently, is anatomized in terms of conspiracy, aimed at making us acquiesce in bourgeois values. But never, in *Mythologies*, does one witness the invention of a myth, its transmission; and one must know what they are doing or not doing.

A further objection concerns the examples which Barthes uses to elucidate the means by which myth appropriates already known signs and recycles them. The French scholar showing a clock of a French soldier saluting the initials of imperialism. We may well agree with this, but does a consensus of it being an assertion that the statue is a statue? If the photograph appeared, say, in an imaginary text at a hypothetical class of flagrant lecturers, its signified would probably have been different.

But it is pointless to try and find *Mythologies* as if it was a sort of study of mass culture; Barthes's ideology into myths as much as he them and his own energetic ideological preferences are one of the book's major attractions. Dr Lavers has done her best with his learned allusive French and she is fully beyond the call of duty—her own is sometimes half-throttled by her determination to stick to the purports of speech in English as used in the original. Wisely, she does not set out to re-create what she criticizes, in *Tel Quel*, as the "légère" of Barthes's style; and an excellent to have, at last, in English a part of what remains one of the most effective and innovative books to have been published in France since the war.

THE STATE OF ENGLISH—6

University of London

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE SETTING of Simon Gray's play *Butley* (dedicated to "the staff and students, past, present and future, of the English Department, Queen Mary College, London") is an office in a college of London University. The second act begins with a student reading Ben Butley her essay on *The Winter's Tale*.

Hemlock's reawakening—the statue restored to life after a winter of sixteen years' duration—is in reality Leontes's reawakening, spiritually, and of course the most moving exemplification of both its realization there and thus of our own spiritual sap rising.

When Butley has had as much of this as he can take, he asks the student, Miss Hasman, to skip to the last sentences, which turn out to be:

So just as the seasonal winter was the winter of the soul, so is the seasonal spring the spring of the soul. The changes from disease to floral, from time from mud to brightness to joyfulness. As we reach the play's climax we find our own spiritual sap rising.

(After a long pause): Sap?

MISS HASMAN: Sap.

MR. S. S. P. Yes, I think sap's a better word than some others that spring to mind. Good. Well, thank you very much. What do you want to do—mean, after your exams?

MISS HASMAN: Teach.

MR. S. S. P. English?

MISS HASMAN: Yes.

MR. S. S. P. Well, I suppose that's more radical than being a teacher of exams, for which I think you're already qualified, by the way.

MR. BUTLEY is amusingly, even sardonically, but his conviction, Miss Hasman's essay could have been written in the English Department of most universities, but the concern with examinations, the final, awesome reckoning, seems even more pressing in London than elsewhere. More people have emphasized to me the importance of London as an examining machine: with BAs and MAs and tables on the former. It is an interesting dramatic scene of verbal thumping, a tragedy of the impossible reciprocity.

Beyond the historians, Sartre's preamble sees this episode as a struggle in the battle to make psychology more centred on a subject and less on an object. Two of his team, J. B. P. Pinquard and Bernard Pinquard, justifiably condemn Sartre's unscrupulous exploitation of this material for his private war on psychoanalysis but, in *Family Life*, this text does seem a visible backing to R. D. Laing's attempted revolution.

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anything outside one's planned examination subjects becomes strictly non-relevant.

Not an unfamiliar complaint, but one heard expressed with peculiar emphasis and frequency at London.

The syllabus that guides the London student to the chopping-block is a traditionally based, Beowulf to Virginia Woolf affair, covering the corpus of Anglo-Saxon and English Literature in ten papers. Eight of these are compulsory—Old English; Middle English; four periods of English literature (1300-1525, 1525-1660, 1660-1790, 1790-1880), Shakespeare; Commentary and Analysis. The student is free to choose his two Special Subject papers from the following: Literary Criticism from Plato to the Present Day; Old English and Early Middle English Literature to 1300; Old Icelandic; American Literature; The Development of the Drama and Theatre in Europe and America from 1830 to the Present Day; English Literature from 1880 to the Present Day; History of English Grammar, Word-formation and Vocabulary; History of English Sounds, Spellings and Inflections; Present-Day English Structure and Usage; English Phonetics; Introduction to Bibliography; Anglo-Saxon Archaeology; Classical Background to English Literature.

To any tentative suggestion that London University has a syllabus that might be called, well, old-fashioned it is usually retorted that students who take as their two options the drama paper and English Literature from 1880 to the present day will do one-fifth of their papers on the literature of the past hundred years. Well, yes, but the fact remains that three papers take the student only as far as 1525 and since one of these papers is the notoriously time-consuming Anglo-Saxon, the three probably take up a third of the student's time, if not of his enthusiasm.

The Anglo-Saxon issue again

As with other places where the study of Anglo-Saxon is compulsory, Anglo-Saxon turns out to be a major issue of debate. Some students I spoke to had been surprised to find the ancient tongue rewarding: "Anglo-Saxon moved and amazed me", said one, adding hopefully: "I have the rest of my life to read what I want." For others, though, it was—so to speak—the thorn in their sides. One student called it

an outstanding anachronism in an archaic syllabus, a "foreign" language that one is forced to come to grips with in order to translate it. One then discovers it in translation—a full procedure, and one which consumes an immense amount of time in an already vastly overcrowded syllabus.

A third group viewed it with vague distaste but seemed to accept it as somehow part of the human condition. A University Reader in English said to me that he thought the three groups—those who enthuse, those who loathe, and those who grudge and bear it—are of about equal size. This comfortable impression I had myself gained from talking to the students—as in Oxford; I couldn't help reflecting that ten years

ago it would have been difficult to find a third of the English student body actually enthusing about Old English.

One slight relaxation for those who find Anglo-Saxon an iron grind is the recently introduced opportunity to take two papers at the end of the second year (the third year in the case of Hirkbeck)—the Old English paper and/or one of the three literature papers that cover the period from 1525 to 1880. This at least gives the student one year in which to study English Literature without having Beowulf on his back, and judging by the numbers who avail themselves of this opportunity, the innovation seems to have been welcomed. Some concern was expressed to me, though, about the fact that if a student fails these papers in his second year he can take them again, whereas if he merely does badly but passes he is not allowed to have another crack. I heard of the case of one student who failed at the end of his second year and was thereby shocked into great exertions; he re-took the paper at the end of his third year and secured a beta double plus. If, on the other hand, he had done slightly better at the first attempt and scraped through with a C, he would have been stuck with it for good.

The Examiners' Report for 1971, however, did find that candidates who took the paper a year before Finals generally performed much more impressively than those who took it with the other papers. The examiners also found that the standard of work in Old English had altogether shown "a marked (and very welcome) rise". There were those, it was regretted, who "evidently decided to try to get by without studying *Beowulf* or with only studying more than the first 500 lines of *Beowulf*". Likewise too many candidates attempted to write knowingly on the *Later Genesis* without any familiarity with those parts of the poem which are not in Sweet's *Reader*. Worse still: "Many apparently did not even realize that the text in the *Reader* is an extract."

In the English Literature 1525-1660 paper, work on Spenser won the examiners' approval. Guess what? "Those who did write on *The Faerie Queene* had usually read the whole poem." As a revelation of the strategies and counter-strategies induced by the examination system it is worth quoting further from this particular report. Students should note here that the old buffers are more cunning than they seem:

The most significant distinction between those who achieved a good class and those who either scraped or failed was the latter's dependence on prepared essays (for example, on Marlowe's over-reaching characters, Webster's "bewilderment", and the figure of Satan in *Paradise Lost*).

Linked with this is irrelevance. In answering Qn 3a, weaker candidates used the same trite quotations to illustrate moods as varying as patience, contrition, passion, disquiet, self-pity and resentment. Qn 4a was here the biggest death-trap, for even quite able candidates usually chose examples outside the period specified (1525-1570).

It would appear that lazy candidates prepare three or four major authors

for books by major authors with a few standard critical judgments on them. A few papers revealed knowledge of four plays and no more. The narrowness of range was particularly disastrous in questions inviting comparison or choice. Thus some candidates, having prepared only the one poet, were unable to compare Wyatt and Surrey (Qn 3a). Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* alone frequently served for 4b. Qn 1b showed that most Miltonists had read both *Comus* and *Samson Agonistes*, but that some, evidently banking on *Paradise Lost*, had left out *Paradise Regained*, Qns 9 and 11 elicited limited illustrations from two, sometimes even only one, play. Those who attempted Elizabethan fiction (Qn 7) had often read only *Utopia* or *The Unfortunate Traveller*.

There is a clear distinction between candidates able to apply a "background" knowledge and those for whom few books of this period exist *in vitro*. The latter could not cope with "Humanism" in Qn 1, explaining it vaguely as "Humanitarianism" or "compassion". There was some equally vague waffle (in this case unsolicited) about "courtly love" in answers to Qns 3a and 5. A few even misinterpreted "imagery" as "debate" in answering Qn 8. "Formal logic" and "scholastic theology" (Qn 13) proved the biggest obstacles of this kind.

The paper rewarded not only the clever but the conscientious. Success was achieved by the well-read whereas those who had scanned only a few books and anthology pieces suffered accordingly.

Dire severity indeed.

The uses of practical criticism

The examiners' comments on many other papers also complained of excessive reliance on stock answers. Such vile conduct is not of course possible in the newly instituted "Commentary and Analysis" paper, allegedly so-called to avoid the "Cambridge taint" of calling it Practical Criticism. It is hard to believe, but an apparently reliable source assures me that when this paper was being set up, some members of the board actually moved that it should not require the making of value-judgments. A proposal apparently was put forward that practical criticism should be "taught" by seating three or four staff members around a table and having them pose knowledgeably over unattributed passages of English prose and verse while the students watched in admiration. The suggestion was scotched when it was pointed out that there was a television panel game which worked on just these lines.

It is interesting that at a time when some other universities seem to be losing faith in practical criticism and when even at Cambridge there is talk of abandoning it, London should be newly adopting it. It was emphasized to me, however, that although the paper as such has only just been instituted, there have in fact always been practical criticism classes. The paper was set for the first time last year, and students found it (according to the Examiners' Report) testing and challenging "and in a few cases emotionally exhausting". Examiners and students alike seem to have found it a great relief not to have to cope with questions that merely tested knowledge and memory, that could be mugged up in advance and mechanically spilled in the examination room. The examiners found performance in the paper to be of a high standard and were impressed by the "freshness of response, the enjoyment of literature which was communicated, and, in some papers, by an apprehension and feeling that was movingly honest". They detected "almost no synthetic or willed responses". Little critical jargon, and considered that technical grapplings had been tactfully conducted. Scarcely able to contain themselves, the examiners paid this final tribute: "To our great joy, most candidates resisted the temptation to write a lot." On the whole, teachers with whom I have spoken seem to share the examiners' enthusiasm, though some thought that its success sprang from its novelty, from the fact that students did not know what to expect from it: "If it falls

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Choose, and accept the consequences

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE:

Situations, VIII

478pp. 32fr.

Situations, IX

364pp. 26fr.

Paris: Gallimard.

"The essential thing is to choose and to keep faith with your choice. That is what I have done." Whether the pressure comes from without or within, Jean-Paul Sartre continues to believe, we must make it our own and work through the consequences.

These two volumes of *Situations* cover Sartre's active response to the following areas of recent conflict: the Russell Tribunal, May 1968, the Arab-Israeli dilemma, Czechoslovakia, the role of intellectuals in public life, the social significance of certain writers and painters, and current anthropological, linguistic and psychoanalytical theories. Collectively they provide a packed and self-questioning review of Sartre's recent development and stands.

De Gaulle wrote to Sartre as "mature", and though Sartre energetically repudiated this sly attempt to render him harmless it is clear that for a good many, particularly among militant youth, he is indeed a master still listened to and often invited to participate in their actions. His steadfastness is adaptable. In the Russell Tribunal, against his own grain, he made full use of bourgeois legal criteria to build up a case against the United States Government as war-

criminals, as he also did in France to condemn the illicit seizure of revolutionary newspapers. This is in line with Lenin's famous injunction to steal the enemy's weaponry and turn it against him. Similarly he now, days makes more extended use of sober but telling documentation to support his passionate denunciations: for instance, his view of Vietnam as a "prefabricated Hell". Against the ingrained lies or fearful habits of his class, he pushes himself to think the worst. Given today's world he is in this, unhappily, seldom wrong.

He recognizes that his own end-position is the starting-point for young militants. Revolution is an endless relay-race, often temporarily stalled. Sartre keeps insisting that the left is very sick, moribund even, but that the struggle must be continued, for the undeniable reality is that inequality which the left hopes to combat. His readiness to be interviewed reflects his conviction of the need for information to be reiterated, though he respects students' and young workers' mistrust of verbalizing their responses to culture and politics after the debauch of words in 1968. He knows how insidiously paternalistic are the proponents of their advanced "human engineering" in our advanced societies, and, in contrast, lovingly repeats that refrain from May, 1968: "L'imagination au pouvoir".

His overall view of the "enlarge the field of the possible". Nevertheless, his honesty forces him to speak uncomfortably home truths, for example that the bourgeois press is still more truthful than the revolutionary press.

On the Arab-Israeli conflict, Sartre maintains that his stance is "extremely moderate" and this is certainly one of the few occasions when his plea has been to cool it. The text on Czechoslovakia offers a sustained and penetrating metaphor of the mechanized reality set up by imported socialism: "the reign of petrified reason". He holds that this mechanistic vision of man is the product and not the cause of bureaucratic socialism. In this text, which marks a seemingly irrevocable break with Soviet socialism, Sartre probes the essential task: how are ossified structures to be broken down, so that any future revolutions do not reproduce that kind of socialism? To those who ask him for a positive pointer to a better kind of socialism, he would indicate Italy. In an unusually warm-hearted text on Togliatti and the Italian Communist Party, Sartre dwells wistfully on the living contact between Togliatti and his people, a symbiosis which he as an intellectual in France badly misses.

Intellectuals for Sartre are, despite their universalist culture, gravely handicapped by their own singularity. Their search for "un nouveau statut populaire", their complaint about consequences, the fact that they are the education, these motley factors produce today a highly unstable notion of the intellectual. All Sartre can be sure of is that, if you are an intellectual, you have to be a full-time critic of all paternalisms: family, class, educational, ideological or cultural;

and that there is a place for such critics, because everyone needs to express his experience, and this may take the form of new myths to supersede those dissolved by the "pauvre bain d'idee critique" of their precocious brothers.

Sartre still sees philosophy as drama. And in an extraordinary excerpt from *Les Temps Modernes* he prints a tape-recorded meeting with a psychoanalyst and his patient, which the latter violently turns the tables on the former. It is an interesting dramatic scene of verbal thumping, a tragedy of the impossible reciprocity.

Beyond the historians, Sartre's preamble sees this episode as a struggle in the battle to make psychology more centred on a subject and less on an object. Two of his team, J. B. P. Pinquard and Bernard Pinquard, justifiably condemn Sartre's unscrupulous exploitation of this material for his private war on psychoanalysis but, in *Family Life*, this text does seem a visible backing to R. D. Laing's attempted revolution.

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into a set routine," said one lecturer. "then the students will start writing routine answers."

The University of London is a federation in which the colleges are independent so far as teaching goes (apart from two inter-collegiate lectures on Wednesdays) but with the exception of University College they all subscribe to the same syllabus and examinations. These are rigid enough to lay down a common general line. Particularly in smaller colleges, everyone has their work cut out covering the syllabus without having time to pursue idiosyncratic approaches or the temptations of fashionable intellectual styles. The prospectus for Queen Mary College, for example, tells the would-be English scholar that his study will

combine the two disciplines of analysis and evaluation in the study of language and literature. . . . The two kinds of approach are intended to complement each other. . . . The purpose of the course is to develop, by reading and practice, personal critical judgment which is based on historical awareness. The field is wide, and opportunities for choice, and even some measure of specialization, are plentiful.

The English Studies prospectus at King's, on the other hand, is a good deal less welcoming and flexible. "No one who thinks English a 'soft option' should apply to read the subject at King's College," the applicant is sternly admonished. The study of English literature, he is told further (in language that must surely remind him of the Headmaster on Speech Day), "demands both strenuous and sustained effort".

Moreover the English Department at King's College sees the study of literature as an intellectual pursuit rather than an emotional experience. Its students are accordingly not so much encouraged to express their enthusiasm about the beauty of literature, which is taken for granted, as directed to apply their minds to understanding it in all

its aspects. Finally, reading English is not a direct training for a career. If the study of English literature has to be justified this will be by reference to its excellence in the intrinsic importance of the information it gives about the human condition, and to the manner in which this is given, not to any immediate practical benefits. Successful graduates in English have had an excellent education, but even the most successful have to take further training to qualify them for earning a living.

Well, no one can say he has not been warned. But more than one lecturer told me that such warnings are rarely heeded. Applicants are usually so eager to be accepted that they will agree to anything.

University College's new syllabus

Some colleges, however, are more different than others, and University College is the most different of all. Professors Frank Kermode and Randolph Quirk described the new syllabus at UCL in the *TLS* of June 5, 1969, in an article called "Muse in Change". The 1967 Saunders Report enabled any college of the university to establish its own independent programmes of study—subject to the university's approval—and UCL took swift advantage of this opportunity. The new syllabus offers considerably wider choice than is available in the rest of the university. The scheme of study is set out on a chart which is less complicated than it looks at first sight. Students take ten papers. All start with the three papers in the centre of the diagram—Chaucer and his literary background; The Renaissance; Shakespeare. The other seven papers are chosen by striking out along one of the lines that radiate from this core, and to get to a paper on the periphery that interests the student—say Heroic Poetry—he must take all the intervening papers (in this case Old English and Old English Basic). He

must offer one of the courses which involve special studies in depth (Modern Special Author, Victorian Special Author, American Special Author, Romantic Special Author, Renaissance Special Author, Restoration and Eighteenth Century Special Author, Language Special Author), but not more than two of these.

A course might thus consist of the following ten papers: the central core of Chaucer, Shakespeare and the Renaissance; Critical Analysis; Romantic Period, Modern Period, Modern Special Author; Victorian Period, Victorian Special Author; American Literature.

In the first two terms students begin on two of the central courses—the Renaissance and Shakespeare—and take introductory courses on Language, Speech and Style and the optional courses start in the third term. In the introductory Language course the books that are primarily used are Professor Quirk's *The Use of English*; D. Crystal and D. Davy's *Investigating English Style*; and G. N. Leech's *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*; while in the Medieval Studies introductory course students are required to arm themselves with K. Sisam's *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose*, Chaucer's complete works and D. Whitelock's *An Anglo-Saxon Reader*.

Professors Quirk and Kermode modestly describe the change as radical rather than revolutionary, but in London standards it is clearly a very big step indeed. The obligatory study of Anglo-Saxon has all but disappeared, and the range of choice open to students is considerable. The examination system also presents a bold departure from London practice. Exams are spread over the whole of the student's last year, during which time he writes extended essays for the special studies courses, six six-hour papers for the Chaucer and Shakespeare papers (during

which texts may be consulted) and the critical analysis paper (if it has been chosen); and three-hour papers for the rest. Furthermore, the candidate submits essays done during his studies, and the department's assessment will also be taken into account (in the university in general it is a possibility for College assessment to be admitted as a factor in border-line cases).

The new syllabus was first taught in 1970, so the new degrees will be awarded for the first time only in 1973. It will therefore be some time before the success of the new scheme can be adequately judged. But at the moment staff and students at UCL seem very pleased with it. They don't feel that it is a syllabus for all time, or that changes won't ever be made in it, but they feel that on the whole it's working.

The debate continues

Meanwhile other colleges look at UCL with mixed feelings. Some are frankly jealous of its independence, its size, its prestige. Many express regret that it should have left the federation of other colleges, and hope that one day it may be lured back. It was suggested to me that if the Board had been more flexible UCL might never have had to leave. As it is, if a rapprochement is to be made, it will obviously be the rest of the University that has to make a move. In fact the Board of Studies has been pondering syllabus changes for two years and another meeting on the subject is being held today. It will be a long time before they come into effect—and even when the Board of Studies makes up its mind, approval has still to be given by the Academic Council and by the Senate. It seems likely however that the new scheme

will have a core of two compulsory papers (Chaucer and Shakespeare) reducing the work load to eight, that the comment and analysis paper will become optional, and that Old English will cease to be compulsory paper, but will be taught in each college in the year as the college finds it.

It might have been expected that the new syllabus would have been confined to older staff, the most articulate opposition to the new proposals was expressed by younger lecturers, in different colleges, and very much Eng. Lit. Both were concerned that the new large gaps to be left in the graduate's study. The idea of a new English literature was being done, and though London was clearly not going to produce a new East Anglia, the new proposals to point in that direction. The choice there is for the student, he becomes of why he is studying it, one of them said. He felt whatever its faults, the old syllabus was self-justifying; it made no sense about what it was setting out to do, or how it was going to do it. In new proposals did not have the same heretofore. Both these lecturers in a university like London, geographically scattered, where and when they returned to their home city or even of college, it was not clear that the syllabus should be a thing with a firm self-justification. Such opinions will probably prevail, minority, however, and it is likely in the near future the Board of Studies will cautiously take a step in the direction mapped out by University College.

Cavalier and critics

DAVID FARLEY-HILLS (Editor): *Rochester: The Critical Heritage* 275pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul £3.75.

When the Robbins committee issued its *Final Report* and new universities began to spring up all over the country, one of the predictable consequences was a growth of educational books offering predigested material for the new academic candidates. This industry has grown notably in recent years, as one new series of volumes has followed another. Since a series has some sort of connexion—one volume is likely to sell another (good for the publisher)—and since the work is often not especially arduous it can be undertaken as a pleasant relaxation by established scholars, and as a preliminary canter by those who are in the process of establishing themselves. In the circumstances we must expect that such jobs for the book-sellers will vary in quality and usefulness, and that some will fit into a series better than others.

The latest volume in the "Critical Heritage" series shows the sort of thing that can happen when a publisher is the "onlie begetter" of a book that would never have been born at all if it had not been requisitioned, presumably on the advice of a general editor. Rochester, who for the past three hundred years has been a rather better than average minor poet, has now become fashionable, and is in some danger of coming into more than his own. In the present bourgeois-Restoration climate his habit, both in life and literature, of taking his clothes off in public has considerably inflated his reputation. But whatever we may think of Rochester today, all the evidence goes to show that past generations had little to say about him as a poet, and were much more interested in how he flamboyantly lived and how he died. So far as the critical heritage is concerned, it could be adequately stated in a few hundred words.

Faced with this situation David Farley-Hills might well have thrown in his hands, but he was given the assignment to compile a critical

anthology, and he proceeds to compile. Among his less exceptional offerings are the entire text of Bishop Burnet's *Some Passages of the Life and Death of . . . Rochester*, Robert Wodeley's *Preface to Rochester's Poems* and John Dryden's *Poems*. Together with the introduction those account for over a hundred pages; but Mr Farley-Hills is still left with about 100 pages to fill, and he proceeds to fill them with long elegiac pieces by such poets as Oldham, Aphra Behn, Flaccus, Samuel Woodford, which contain only a few grains of critical value buried in sacks of straw, or even chaff. Among the longer passages there is one serious attempt to evaluate Rochester by his contemporaries in the *Revue des Mondes* (1857), but there is also much deplorable rubbish, reaching critical nadir in some inane observations by one Thomas Longueville in 1903.

Mr Farley-Hills is not to be blamed for the fact that he has found so little that is worth presenting; the material simply isn't there. The fault lies rather with the publishers for dreaming up the product and setting the conveyor-belt in motion. The editor, however, must incur responsibility for his introduction, which contains a number of errors (as well as several misprints). George Strevie, Marquis of Halifax, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's mother-in-law is allotted to as the "Duchess of Montagu" which she never was; and for some queer reason Nathaniel Lee is quoted four times as "Nathaniel Lee". Reference is made to "a satire of Defoe's fairly well known poem of 1702. On the credit side it can fairly be said that Mr Farley-Hills has made a determined search for material; but when he realised how scanty it was going to be, what pity he did not consider extending his volume to cover Sedley, Dunster and the other Cavalier poets, between them they would have come nearer to justifying the enterprise.

MUSIC

Experimentation and regimentation in Russia

BORIS SCHWARZ: *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia 1917-1970* (Stopp. Barrie and Jenkins. £6.

Boris Schwarz's book aims at nothing less than an encyclopedic review of all aspects of Soviet music from the Revolution onwards. A gargantuan task, to put it mildly; one moreover which could easily end up as a huge panorama of names and dates, as dull as a laundry-list, and useful only as a source for recondite cross-references. Happily, this book is nothing of the sort. Professor Schwarz has achieved a feat of condensation. All the essential facts are there, including quite a number that have not previously been available to Western readers. And yet the narrative flows very rarely silted up by over-concentrated information, or distorted by factual error.

Professor Schwarz has a distinct advantage over many Western critics and observers. He was born in Russia, and therefore understands at first hand the convoluted official line that so often defeats translation. And, since emigrating to America, he has made a number of extended return visits to his homeland, and has had opportunities to discuss musical policies, and education with numerous leading Soviet specialists. He is particularly well-informed about the two main artistic catastrophes—1936 and 1948—

and does not hesitate to take issue with Western observers who have perpetuated factual errors; for instance, Alexander Werth in his dating of the Muradeli opera which sparked off the 1948 explosion. Professor Schwarz indicts Zhdanov, not only for the 1948 fracas, but also for involvement in the 1936 decree. If he was in fact responsible for the handling of both confrontations—and it would be interesting to know in more detail on what basis the author comes round to his view of the 1936 debacle—Zhdanov emerges as the main eminence grise, not only of the period from 1945 on, but also during the years between the two catastrophes. It seems strange, too, that Zhdanov was one of the very few names to escape posthumous vilification after the Twentieth Party Congress of 1956. Truly, one of the most mysterious, malevolent figures in the whole saga; and we must be grateful to Professor Schwarz for adding a few more pieces to the portrait which must eventually emerge.

The book is equally valuable in its survey of the conservatoires, and their influence. The early years, from 1917 to roughly 1932, are particularly well-documented, though the rest of the period is also recorded with a wealth of interesting detail.

But it is unfortunate that Professor Schwarz takes for granted the reader's familiarity with musical trends in the years immediately preceding the Revolution; a mere eight pages are devoted to this subject. Yet this is the frame within

which the subsequent artistic events gain their shape, credibility and significance. Certainly, one is delighted to see the maligned Rimsky-Korsakov restored to favour again, at least as a man. His strength of character and integrity, subtly undermined for Western ears by the persuasive but scarcely unbiased views of Stravinsky, come through clearly in this account. But his story is only one aspect of a tremendous, long-standing artistic struggle, and it seems contentious to launch an extended account of the 1917 Revolution itself from such a cursory examination of its background.

Professor Schwarz is entirely justified in laying great emphasis on the Party resolution of 1932, "On the Reconstruction of Literary and Artistic Organisations". Here, rather than in the later official pronouncements, lies the change of climate which was to have such a far-reaching effect on all Soviet art. This is carefully presented, with direct quotations wherever possible, giving a clear picture of the methods by which the new rigidity swept aside the era of experimentation and relative artistic freedom. Boris Asafiev, in particular, emerges as a key figure—a man doomed to see his sine influence subverted, his followers resigned to silence, and his final gestures reduced to pathos and self-abnegation.

Inevitably, the name which occupies the centre of the stage for the crisis of 1936 is that of Shostakovich. While the author's documentation here is excellent, there is little analysis of the actual musical style

which occasioned the outburst. The reader is left with a generalized outline—*Lady Macbeth* influenced by the decadent Western trends of Wagner, and so on—without any detailed examination of the music itself. Thus, the crucial fact that this was a work less dissonant than the same composer's previous opera *The Nose*, less complex than his Fourth Symphony, and less disruptively satirical than a number of its immediate contemporaries, is lost sight of. Without this perspective, the essential flavour of the whole emotional, irrational outburst cannot possibly be appreciated.

Lady Macbeth was, after all, something of a red-herring. It provided a convenient target because the normally intangible issues of music were literally given flesh and made explicit, and therefore more vulnerable to official interference. (It is significant that Shostakovich never again completed an opera; he would not risk a similar exposure.) Yet the underlying issue, musically speaking, is more clearly revealed in the contrast of style and scale between the suppressed Fourth Symphony of Shostakovich—sprawling and self-indulgent in its use of the orchestra—and the Fifth Symphony by which he returned triumphantly to public favour. Here was an opportunity to bring the discussion down to particular scores, particular musical signposts, and yet to encompass the nature of the whole problem. The author makes no comparative analysis of these two central works, beyond a superficial descrip-

tion of their obvious external facets. Turning to the 1948 crisis, the same lack of a purely musical focus is evident. Instead of revealing the detailed contrast between the works which Shostakovich, for instance, kept hidden at this time—the First Violin Concerto, or the embryonic Tenth Symphony—and the public cantatas, etc., which were issued, Professor Schwarz prefers to remain on the comparative terra firma of political events. Certainly, he points out the dichotomy which had grown up between public and private faces; but an analysis of the music itself—the disposition of notes, the differences in complexity and density of thought—is absent. Surely most readers would willingly have bartered some of the space devoted to the shifts of leadership in the conservatoires—these perhaps reserved for a final summary—in return for a more penetrating view of the actual music involved in the two great catastrophes. It is, after all, only the music which is finally of interest, when all the exhortations and the political vaultings are forgotten.

The value of Professor Schwarz's book as a uniquely informative survey of events is beyond dispute: it will long remain essential reading for anyone seriously interested in this huge subject. And perhaps, having given us the necessary political, social and biographical information, he might be persuaded to produce a companion volume devoted entirely to the music itself; it would be a work of even more central and crucial importance.

Pianists writing about pianists

KONRAD WOLFF: *The Teaching of Arthur Schnabel* (Faber and Faber. £3.

MARGUERITE LONG: *Le Piano with Debussy* (Translated by Olive Senior-Hills) (Faber plus 8 plates. Dent. £2.75.

Books by pianists about pianists might be thought to have only a specialist appeal. This is far from the case with these two recently published volumes. Konrad Wolff, a pupil of Schnabel from 1936 onwards, is a pianist and a scholar of Bach's vocal and instrumental works, Mozart's operas, Beethoven's piano and Schubert's *Lieder*, is essential to the understanding of the keyboard works. "Creators are not specialists," was one of Schnabel's favourite paradoxes, and it follows that his approach, though directed at his own students, is relevant to all music-making. Similarly, Marguerite Long's memories of Debussy quite naturally gravitate to the piano works she studied with him. But her opening chapter is largely concerned with Le Mystère de Saint Sébastien.

Mme Long was a famous and talented long-lived pianist: she was born in 1878, four years before Schnabel, and—unlike him—she sur-

vived into her late eighties. Her thoughts on Debussy were published in 1964, and they now appear in an excellent translation. Both books are therefore overdue. They are, however, far from out of date: musical interpretation is a perennial subject, and new evidence is always welcome when handed down from an authentic source. Otherwise it might seem perverse, or ironic, to review two such accounts under one heading.

Schnabel and Debussy would seem to have little in common. The latter Debussy pretended to detest Mozart and Beethoven, two of Schnabel's gods; and Schnabel seldom, if ever, played Debussy. Nevertheless to read the books side by side, as it were, is a fascinating experience. Schnabel the teacher objected to the "vague and indeterminate sound" that so often passed for Debussy-playing; and Debussy, who loved Bach and Chopin, would have agreed with him. In his words, "the hands are not meant to hover in the air over the piano but to enter into it"; he demanded, according to Mme Long, obedience to his marks and utmost precision.

First, Schnabel. Above all, he was a Beethoven specialist, and, whether admitted or not, all modern idiom of classical playing have been influenced by him, directly or indirectly—

through memories of his performances or through his records, his editions, or the ideals he passed on to his pupils. Mr Wolff was such a pupil, and he planned his book years ago for collaboration with Schnabel, in interpretation. Schnabel's technique was in its own way without equal, and the greatest compliment was paid to him by a pianist of the traditional virtuoso school who once said to him, after a performance of late Beethoven: "You ought to play Liszt, you know. You could!"

Mme Long's book is, she admits, not a biography; but her reminiscences of Debussy, random and unchronological, nonetheless give a fairly comprehensive picture: her own life and tastes are interwoven; amusingly, when she recalls how she kept from him the fact that she was working on Beethoven's "Emperor"; tragically, as she mentions her husband, the musicologist Joseph de Marliave, killed in action in the very first month of the 1914 war. It was in the same year that, persuaded by Debussy, she began to study his piano works with him. "You don't want to play my music?" he had asked. "On the contrary, I admire it too much. But it is too difficult."

Her interpretative comments on most of the important piano works form the heart of the book—they are both poetic and practical—but the outer chapters recapture vividly the

musical world in France at the time. There were the famous virtuosi—Planté, Sauer, Puchmann—and there was the aloof, stringently beautiful sound-world of Debussy himself, in which—to quote Jean Cocteau—"a thousand vague marvels in nature have at last found their interpreter".

Mme Long's commentary is informal and intimate. She depicts the personality, the loves, and the sufferings. Her middle chapter ranges from *L'Après-midi* to Debussy's marriage with Emma Bardac, to the Children's Corner Suite and his daughter Chou-Chou, further immortalized in a series of touchingly paternal postcards from abroad:

"Then Chou-Chou's ducky went into a shop kept by a very ugly man and his still uglier daughter. Daddy took off his hat politely, made signs like a deaf-mute to ask for the prettiest postcards on which to write to his dear little girl. The old man was quite overcome; as for his daughter, she died instantly."

Alas, Chou-Chou herself died of diphtheria at barely fifteen. This grief Debussy was spared: the man who proudly styled himself "musicien français" was buried a year previously, in 1918. Not long before, Debussy had been to hear his suite *Pour le piano* played by a famous (unspecified) pianist. "How was it?" Mme Long asked him. "Dreadful. He didn't miss a note." Schnabel would have appreciated that remark.

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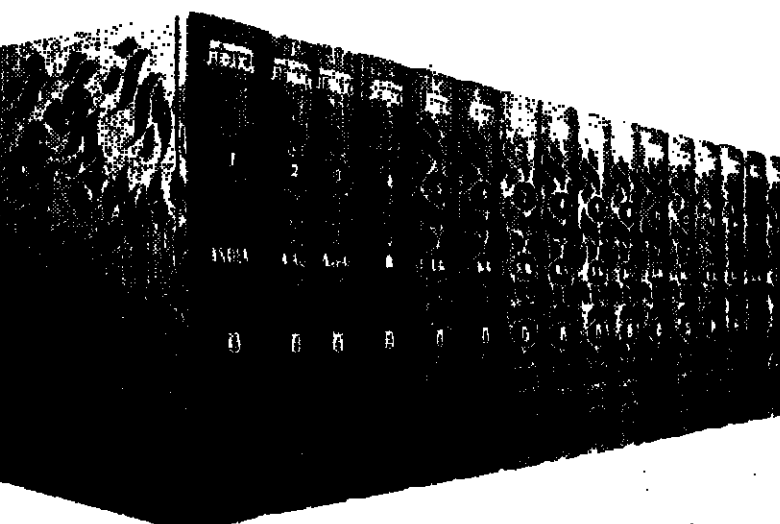
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World Affairs

MEHON, K. P. S. *The Indo-Soviet Treaty, Signing and Meaning*. 83pp. Delhi: Vikas. Rs12.

PAITE, SATYAVRATA. *The Marican Mirage*. 233pp. Bombay: New Horizon. Rs35.

These two books illustrate in an interesting manner the conflict of opinion which now exists in India over the relations, past, present and future, between New Delhi and Moscow. K. P. S. Menon shows himself, in these nine articles reprinted from various publications, a staunch believer in the disinterested friendship of the Soviet Union and in its utility to his country. It is a view which deserves respect, but the implicit suggestion that the events leading up to the 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty, accompanied as they were by massive diplomatic support and a lavish supply of sophisticated armaments, were something different in kind from the corresponding policy which the Nixon Administration adopted towards Pakistan is surely rather naive.

On the tragedy of Bangladesh Mr Menon takes an equally simplistic view; to him, the massacres were all on one side. The question of who originally started them is ignored. Mr Menon appears indifferent to the sufferings of the Bihar settlers. The kind of attitude which Mr Menon adopts is just that which fills Mr Pate with seething indignation—he would describe it, no doubt, as sloppy, sentimental and purblind. He is a very hard-hitting writer, whose previous attacks upon what he regards as his country's effete and spineless foreign policy have attracted a good deal of attention. In this latest book he turns all his heavy guns upon the deficiencies of Marxism as a creed and as a political programme in a manner which would give Mr Menon a cold shudder. Not that Mr Menon is necessarily a Marxist himself—indeed few Hindus are, doctrinally at least. But to attack in this manner a plan for life which in India's good and great friend the Soviet Union holds so dear... what inconceivable taste!

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